



No. XVIII]

Contents

[APRIL 1884

PAGE

Jack's Courtship: a Sailor's Yarn of Love and Shipwreck. Chapters XVII.-XIX. 561

By W. CLARK RUSSELL

A New Theory of Sun-spots. 587

By R. A. PROCTOR

Steeple-chasing 604

By ALFRED E. T. WATSON

A Mad Parson 614

By JULIAN STURGIS

The Macready Riot in New York 636

By W. C. MILLER

A Pilgrimage to Selborne 644

By T. E. KEBBEL

Madam. Chapters XVI.-XX. 653

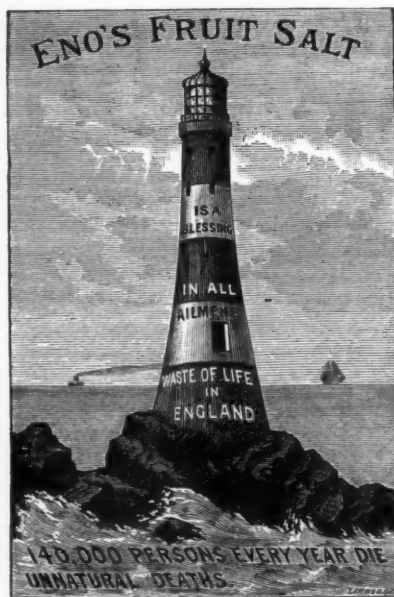
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NO. VII. APRIL. CONTENTS.

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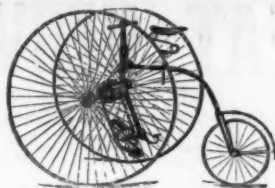
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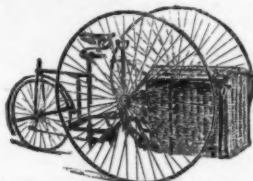
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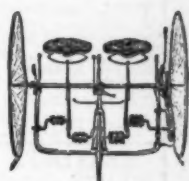
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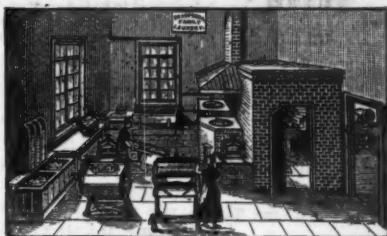
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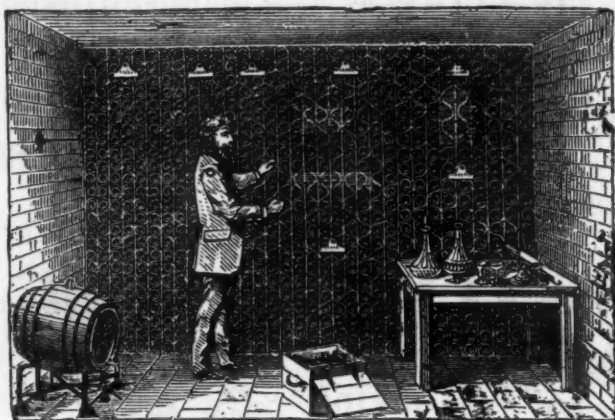
LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1884.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
JACK'S COURTSHIP: A SAILOR'S YARN OF LOVE AND SHIPWRECK. By W. CLARK RUSSELL	561
Chapter XVII.—The 'Strathmore.'	
" XVIII.—Hoodwinking.	
" XIX.—I embark.	
A NEW THEORY OF SUN-SPOTS. By R. A. PROCTOR	587
STEEPLE-CHASING. By ALFRED E. T. WATSON	604
A MAD PARSON. By JULIAN STURGIS	614
THE MACREADY RIOT IN NEW YORK. By W. C. MILLER	636
A PILGRIMAGE TO SELBORNE. By T. E. KEBBEL	644
MADAM. Chaps. XVI.—XX. By Mrs. OLIPHANT	653
THE 'DONNA'	682

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APRIL 1884.

Jack's Courtship.

A SAILOR'S YARN OF LOVE AND SHIPWRECK.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE 'STRATHMORE.'

A GOOD proof of the interest my uncle took in my proposal to ship along with Florence and go to sea with her was in a letter I received next morning from him, enclosing a cheque for one hundred pounds. 'My dear Jack,' he wrote, 'the accompanying money will enable you to pay your passage out, and lay in a stock of shirts and toothpicks for the voyage. Let us have no thanks—no nonsense. Just pay the draft into your bank, if you have one, and belay all jaw about it unless you want me to think you a swab, which is a term I think you object to. You'll be giving us a call soon, I hope. Yours, Uncle.'—There also arrived a long letter from Sophie in answer to the lamentations I had poured out to her two days before. The dear girl had evidently taken a great deal of trouble in writing this reply, for there were no less than seven quotations from five poets, whose works it must have been no joke to her to overhaul for the lines, all of which were very apt and very fully bearing upon the state of my heart; and moreover she was exceedingly poetical on her own account, as for example, when she assured me that love was a plant which tears were invented to keep green, and that if Florence and I were truly attached, Mr. Alphonso Hawke might cause all the seas of the world not only to roll between us but over us without washing

away our affection. She gave me some news which was more interesting to me than the poetry, namely, that Mr. Hawke, his sister and daughters, had arrived at Clifton Lodge on the previous day, and that a Miss Booth had told her that Colonel Jones had said to her father that Mr. Hawke had told him that his daughter would be leaving Clifton for Australia in about three weeks' time. I say that this news was interesting to me because it proved that up to the present, at all events, no change had come over the spirit of Alphonso's intentions.

I wrote a few words of thanks to my uncle for his handsome gift, and a letter to Sophie, the production of which afflicted me with a lively sense of hypocrisy, as, in order not to excite suspicion, I had to write as if Florence's going rendered me inconsolable. However, if it is possible to conceive any sort of deception forgivable, I think mine was, ungrateful as it might appear, for it was practised at the request of my uncle, who very properly did not want his wife and daughter to have any knowledge of the blow I was aiming at old Hawke's schemes.

Two days after my chat with my uncle at the hotel, I determined to take a run down to the East India Docks and have a look at the *Strathmore*. But first I thought it advisable to call on my way at the offices of the Company, and ascertain if Aunt Damaris and Florence had booked their passage. Arrived at Fenchurch Street I entered the offices of Duncan, Golightly, & Co., and as I stood at the broad counter, behind which half a dozen of clerks were hard at work, the sense of my old life came up in me so strong that I felt as if my calling was still that of a sailor, and that I was here to obtain a berth. There was one old chap I remembered, the others were strangers. The old fellow looked at me through his spectacles, but did not recognise me, and went on with his work. A young man came to the counter, and I said, 'You have a ship advertised to sail on the 28th?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Does she call at Plymouth?'

'No. Passengers must embark at the Docks or Gravesend.'

'I expect some friends will take cabins in that vessel, and if they go I shall accompany them. Is your cuddy full?'

'No, sir; there are still three cabins vacant.'

'Give me the names of the people who have already booked, will you? I want to know if my friends are among them.'

'What are their names, sir?'

'Miss Damaris Hawke and Miss Florence Hawke.'

He looked at a pile of letters, and presently pulled out a sheet of paper, gilt-edged, adorned with Alphonso's old gander, and after glancing over it said, 'Miss Damaris Hawke and Miss Florence Hawke, No. 6 cabin. The first-named lady arrived home in the vessel last voyage, and occupied the cabin she now applies for.' He then laid a plan of the saloon before me with the

cabins numbered. There was a row of six cabins of a side and two aft, the one on the port side being the captain's; the two forward berths facing each other and coming just under the break of the poop were occupied respectively by the first and second mates. 'This, then,' said I, putting my finger on No. 6—that is, the one next the captain's, right aft—'is the cabin that has been taken by the two ladies you name. Which are the berths still to let?'

He indicated them.

'I'll go and have a look at the ship,' said I. 'What's the charge for one of these cabins?'

'Sixty-two pound ten.'

'Do I get the cabin to myself for that?' I asked. He answered that that would depend. The Company only guaranteed exclusive use on payment of such and such a sum (I forget what it was). 'I'll save my money and take my chance,' said I, 'of there being more cabins than passengers, in which case of course I shall have the berth to myself?' He answered, 'Yes, certainly.'

'Are the ladies sure of taking No. 6?'

'Sure,' he replied. 'Half the passage money was sent with the application.'

My heart came into my throat when I heard this.

'Tell me now,' said I, 'if the Captain Thompson whom I see advertised as the commander of the *Strathmore* is the Daniel Thompson who was some years ago second mate of your ship the *Montrose*.'

He went to the clerk in the spectacles and repeated my question. The old fellow said 'Yes,' without looking up.

'Is he in London?' I inquired.

'Yes, sir, and if you're going down to the Docks at once you'll probably find him about. If you like, I'll accompany you and show you the ship.'

I thanked him and said I believed I could find my way there without assistance, and so quitted the office. I was in joyous spirits as I made my way to the railway station in Fenchurch Street. The fact of the cabin having been secured for Aunt Damaris and Florence, and half the fare paid, made me realise the meaning of the adventurous job I was upon to a degree I had not approached before. For three months certain should I be associated with my darling, week after week, day after day, and my heart beat high in me as with the rapidity of thought I drew a score of pictures of our rapturous communion, in gales and calms, in heat and cold, under skies of brass and nights soft and sweet with moonlight and dew. And a mighty vigorous imagination I must have had even to come near to anything poetical in Fenchurch Street Station. The roadway was filled with a crowd of grimy fellows, turnpike sailors, loafing scarecrows as bad as the worst specimens of the raga-

muffins I have seen shivering in shipping-yards and scrawling their hatred of captains and owners upon benches and whitewashed walls. It took me back some years when I got upon the platform and looked at the people who were waiting for the train; mates in velvet waistcoats, skippers with red faces and a consequential strut smoking cigars, seamen of divers nationalities, some with white bags, some with all they had in the world wrapped up in a red or blue handkerchief; Dutchmen grunting like pigs, negroes with a bland grin on their black faces as they stared about them, and English Jack, drunk, shoving, and noisy. I say the sight took me back some years, and it wanted little to persuade me that my chest and bedding were aboard, and that I was bound along with the others for the 'pier-head jump.'

Presently a Blackwall train arrived, a lot of people tumbled out, and I took my seat in a first-class carriage that smelt like the parlour of a public-house after a night's orgy. Just as we were about to start, the door was flung open and a man bundled in. I was full of thought and hardly glanced at him. Presently he said, 'Very genteel rolling stock they have on this line, sir. But I suppose anything's good enough for sailors. Do you object to my lighting a pipe to kill the fragrance in this atmosphere?'

'Not at all,' said I, looking at him hard, struck by his voice, in which I fancied I could catch a note that was familiar to me.

He was a rather short squarely built man of about forty-five years of age, with reddish whiskers and beard that half circled his face as though you should cut a grummet of rope in half and pass it under your chin with the ends against your ears; his face was the reddest I ever saw on a man, and rendered peculiar by the colour lying in lines and blotches, so that when you took a close squint at him, his skin seemed to be covered with a red lace veil with the meshes thickened in places. He had fine honest laughing eyes and a heartily cheerful expression of countenance, and was in his way the completest figure of a merchant seaman one could imagine, dressed in dark blue cloth and a cap with a shovel-shaped peak to it. Finding me staring at him, he began to stare at me, meanwhile groping in his side pockets for his pipe and tobacco. At last I said, 'Six years ago I was shipmate with a second mate aboard the *Montrose* named Daniel Thompson. If you are not he, then you are the devil.'

'Daniel Thompson is my name,' said he, 'and six years ago I was second mate aboard the *Montrose*, and—why, heart alive oh! you're Jack Seymour!' and, with a sailor's warmth, he flung down his pipe and tobacco-pouch, jumped into the seat opposite me, and grasped both my hands. 'Think of my not knowing you!' cried he. 'But then you've grown a moustache and you're a foot taller, and who the blazes would recognise Jack Seymour in those shore-going duds?'

'This is a strange meeting, Thompson,' said I. 'Will you believe it—I was actually bound in quest of you. I am going to the docks to have a look at your *Strathmore*. Do you know I am thinking of sailing with you?'

'Sailing with me!' he exclaimed, letting go my hands and returning to his pipe; 'why, I heard that you had knocked off the sea some years ago—come into an estate—and was living up to the hammer somewhere or other.'

'Oh!' said I, laughing, 'don't suppose I'm going to sea with you as a sailor. I'm thinking of taking a cabin in your ship for a voyage to New South Wales. I saw your name in the advertisement as skipper, and just now called at the office of the Company to make sure of you. They told me I should find you aboard.'

'I hope you'll come with me; I hope you'll come!' cried he in his hearty fashion. 'We'll find many a yarn to spin together—many a talk over old days. But what in the name of Moses takes you to sea again, even as passenger? Didn't you get enough of salt water in your time? Only let somebody leave me an estate,' said he, lighting his pipe, 'and there's never a house-agent in the United Kingdom who could find me a dwelling deep enough inland.'

'I'll tell you presently why I am going to sea again,' I replied. 'But first let's hear of yourself. Are you married? are you saving money? how long have you been skipper?'

He answered these questions by a story that carried us to Blackwall, but though I kept on nodding and saying 'Oh!' and 'Really!' and 'Indeed!' I am sure I did not give his yarn all the attention he believed it was receiving. The truth is, my mind was so busy with my own affairs that I could think of nothing else; though I took in enough of what he said to gather that he was married and had a couple of youngsters, that his wife had a trifle of money, and that he had commanded the *Strathmore* two years.

We sallied forth arm in arm, he jabbering incessantly, and, after walking a bit, came abreast of a ship whose name I did not need to inquire. I stopped to have a look. There in front of me lay the counterpart of the vessel in whose heart I had passed many a long month; whose mastheads I had watched swaying under stars which no northern dweller ever beholds, whose massive shrouds had shrieked back the refrain of the Cape Horn hurricane, whose topmost canvas had glimmered like dissolving wreaths of vapour amid the breathless gloom of the hushed tropical night.

'What are you stopping for?' shouted Thompson. 'What do you see that you're staring aloft? Anything wrong there?'

'See!' cried I; 'why, the picture of my old life, Daniel; the old business of the lonely watch, the streaming decks, the bunk under which I used to grope for my boots when the horrid shout

of "Eight bells!" awoke me from dreams of feather beds and soft tack and mutton-chops for breakfast. What a jolly life the sailor's is, Thompson! Why, I'd rather be a rat in your lazarette than go through it again; and yet, hang me if the sight of that craft of yours don't infuse a sort of tenderness into me, too, though, for all I know, her iron ribs may be only one degree removed from the ore, and her timber planking as rotten as an old Stilton cheese.'

'Don't you go and make any mistake of that kind, my young friend,' exclaimed Thompson. 'Rotten! Why, as a matter of strength, the Tower of London's a joke to that ship; and as to her angle frames being one degree removed from the ore, there's nothing wanting but a little grinding to convert them into the loveliest razors in the world. But come aboard, man, come aboard!' and we stepped along the plank over the side and sprang on to the deck.

A dock is to a ship what a dressing-room is to a lady, and you must expect dishevelment until she sallies forth into her ocean-world, when you will find her dressed in the latest fashion, painted and sparkling, and dropping many a handsome curtsy as she goes. The *Strathmore's* topgallant and royal yards were down, all her sails unbent, and the running gear unrove; the yards were braced fore and aft, there were lumpers at work in her hold, and grimy faces grinned at you over the combings of the main hatch; a crane alongside was slinging cases of merchandise into her, and her main deck was a surface of straw, dirt, wet, and what sailors call raffle. But just as a pretty wench with tousled hair, dirty face, befouled frock, and little toes peeping out of her yawning boots, preserves her prettiness and takes the eye in spite of her squalid attire, so did the *Strathmore* offer to the experienced gaze every point of a handsome, powerful clipper ship, notwithstanding her grimy decks, her disordered yards, the nakedness of her upper spars, her rigged-in jibboom. She was, as the advertisement about her said, a composite ship—that is, built of iron frames covered with wood. She was slightly longer than the *Portia*, with a trifle less of beam, and had the reputation of being a very fast sailer, though what is termed a wet ship. This indeed might have been guessed by looking at her bows, which were almost like a yacht's, with hardly any perceptible swell or 'flaring.' Her lower masts were painted white; she had channels, though even then those appendages for spreading wide the lower rigging were going out of date, and chequered sides—a broad white band running the length of her, broken with painted ports, so that with her square stern decorated with a row of cabin windows, short royal masts, and exceedingly square yards, she might at a distance have passed for a frigate.

Thompson, however, gave me very little time to look about:

for after taking a squint down the main hatchway and bawling out some question to the people below, he again seized my arm and walked me into the cuddy, as the saloon under the poop was formerly called. This was a fine sweep of cabin, most handsomely decorated, with maple panellings and stanchions cased in satin-wood, superbly fluted and gilded, whilst as much as was revealed of the mizzenmast was cased so as to resemble a Corinthian column, abaft of which a pianoforte was secured. A very handsome staircase led into the steerage on the lower deck, and on either side were the cabins or berths; whilst overhead were two large skylights, racks full of glass for the tables, globes for gold-fish, together with a row of brightly burnished swinging trays hanging over the tables, which were shaped like the letter T, one running athwartships atop and the other coming down nearly the whole length of the cuddy. I am no upholsterer or house decorator, and cannot talk to you about this interior in such a way as to make you understand what a radiant, breezy drawing-room of a place it was; but I often recall it and other passenger ship saloons I have peeped into when I hear of the splendours of the present age in that way, and wonder that there should be so much brag about us, really as though in magnificence of marine decoration we had gone leagues ahead, and clean out of sight of our ancestors; the truth being that many a long year before my time, in the days of John Company's ships and the castle-like West India traders, the cabins, hired by old Nabobs and opulent planters at an immense cost, were a perfect blaze of costly furniture, as let noble Tom Cringle certify, who, in speaking of a vessel that he boarded of 500 tons, rattles away about panels fitted with crimson cloth, edged with gold mouldings, and superb damask hangings before the stern windows and side berths, and plate-glass mirrors, and brilliant swinging lamps, and a splendid grand piano, and a rudder-case richly carved and gilded to resemble a palm tree, 'the stem painted white and interlaced with golden fretwork, like the lozenges of a pine-apple, while the leaves spread up and abroad on the roof,' and so on and so on. Faith, I often think there is a deal of the swab in our natures: we barely allow our forefathers the smallest merit, and, standing on tiptoe, crow as if we bantams were the only Cochin-chinas creation had produced. Why, who shall swear that at this moment some poor little creature is not writing a book to prove that Trafalgar was a twopenny business, and that it would need the blue-jackets of the present day to make a *battle* of that job? Is not Shakespeare overrated, and is there no poet amongst us capable of better work? Is Wellington a patch upon the living splendid generals whose breasts are one glorious constellation of medals and orders?

But let me haul off from these distracting reflections before I lose my temper and grow personal; for hang me if I'm not already

in the humour, mates, to give you an idea of what honest disgust sounds like! Well, as I have said, Daniel Thompson marched me through the cuddy, past the mizzen-mast, and the piano, and the stove, into his cabin, the door of which he closed, and overhauling a locker took from it a box of cigars and four fat bottles, and then producing some glasses, pointed to the cigar-box and afterwards to a chair, and said, 'Now, Mr. Jack Seymour, make yourself at home, sir.' This I did without parley, helping myself to a glass of excellent liquor and lighting a cigar. He did likewise, and in a few minutes we lay sprawling upon the lockers talking like brothers.

'This is the sort of cabin to go to sea in, Daniel,' said I, casting my eyes round; 'room to grope about in when something you want fetches away and gets lost, and a good view of the world out of those back windows. Is the cabin alongside just as roomy?'

'Just the same size,' he answered.

'They told me at the office that it's taken by a Miss Damaris Hawke.'

'Oho!' said he, 'that's the lady that came home with us this time, and she's going out with us again, eh? She's a rum old fish; only wants a pea-jacket to make her a sailor. Coming on deck one night in the tropics she stepped aft and found the man at the wheel nodding, whereupon, hang me, Seymour, if she didn't take him by the arm and shake him, and ask him if he knew where he was going. The man fell to abusing her—he was a little Dane—and the shindy brought the second mate to them. I laughed till I cried when he told me the story, and ever after the hands called her Lady Damn-her-eyes, and put her into their songs. D'ye know her?' said he suddenly, as if struck by my face.

'Thompson,' said I, 'I'll tell you all about it—why I'm interested in Miss Damaris Hawke, why I'm going to Australia, why I choose this ship. But it's a profound secret, Daniel: a matter that concerns my very senses, for if I'm dished I shall go mad. On your honour as an old shipmate you'll stow what I'm about to tell you as deep down into your silence and confidence as it'll go?'

'Well,' he replied, laughing, 'so long as it don't involve any scuttling or stranding or firing job, you may trust me.'

Thereupon, without any further preface I told him the whole story. How I had gone to Clifton on a visit to some relatives and fallen in love with Florence Hawke: how her father wanted her to marry another man named Reginald Morecombe, whose offer she had refused: how Aunt Damaris had arrived from Sydney and, as I supposed, recommended her brother to send Florence with her to Australia as a good way of getting rid of me: how, as I had no occupation, nothing in the world to do, I had made up my mind to go to Australia with her, and how my resolution had

been completed by discovering that the ship whose name Florence had mentioned was commanded by an old shipmate and friend.

He listened as attentively and gravely as if I was talking to him on freights and bills of lading, and when I had done said, 'I understand, Jack; but is the girl worth the trouble you are going to take?'

'Stop till you see her,' said I.

'Is she fond of you?' he asked.

'I think she is,' I replied.

'And I suppose,' said he, 'that you reckon upon getting her to promise to marry you on your arrival at Sydney.'

I nodded, for there was no use in telling him that this voyage was only undertaken by me as part of a somewhat forlorn courtship.

'I'm afraid,' said he, 'you'll find the aunt a big mouthful as a pill. Does your sweetheart know you intend to join her?'

'No; nothing has been said—nobody but my uncle and you are aware of my intention. I'll get you to tell her I'm aboard when we're clear of the river.'

He grinned and exclaimed, 'I suppose you don't mind trusting me now that you know I have a wife. I wondered at your curiosity when you asked me if I was married; but I understand your fears. I was a very suspicious man myself when I was in love.'

I laughed as I looked at his jolly bright-red face, and observed the self-complacency in it.

'But,' continued he, 'you're giving me, as skipper of this vessel, a rum commission. I hope when I've told her you're aboard you'll do the rest of the business yourself. I'm no hand at messages. I never could talk soft, and when I asked my girl to marry me, all I could find to say was, "Susie, shall we get spliced? Say the word, and when you're ready there'll be a cab at the door with me in it." After all,' said he, 'plain talk is better than romancing. A woman knows what you mean when you sheer alongside of her, and would much rather you should speak out than humbug with her hands and keep her waiting.'

'Your views are very correct,' said I. 'But every man has not your sense. Daniel, there's one thing I shall have to do. I wish it were not necessary, but I don't see my way without it.'

'What?' he asked.

'I shall have to ship under an assumed name. I'll tell you why. Aunt Damaris has never seen me; but she would instantly guess who I am if she were to hear of me as Jack Seymour; and if she's a person capable of giving a seaman a talking to, you may depend on it she would furnish me with even less opportunity of being with my darling than I should find if we all remained at Bristol.'

'That's quite true,' said he. 'If you ship as Brown or Jones, you can talk and walk with your sweetheart without exciting the aunt's suspicions—unless, indeed, you pile on your attentions too thick.'

'I'll not do that,' said I; 'at all events, whilst she's looking.'

'There's no reason,' said he, 'why you shouldn't take an alias. It's the usual thing with murderers, and forgers, and thieves, and why not with lovers? But I say, Seymour, whatever surname you take, please stick to your Christian handle, for I'm sure to call you Jack when I'm not thinking, and if you ship as Alfred or William, the slip will be awkward.'

'Let's settle a name at once,' said I. 'Give me something that'll come easy to you.'

'Anything in two syllables will do for me,' he answered; 'what do you think of Johnson?'

'Too common,' I replied. 'If Aunt Damaris resemble her brother, she respects blood—you know what blood is, don't you, Daniel?'

'I've heard of it,' he replied. 'It belongs to the upper circles, don't it, and is rarely to be found in anything much lower than a squire.'

'As I was saying, if the aunt respects blood it'll be worth while to impress her. I wish you'd allow me three syllables, Daniel.'

'Well, I don't mind three,' said he; 'but whatever it is, let it be pronounced as it's spelt. We brought home a man last voyage called Majoribanks. When I saw the name written, dash my wig if I didn't think he was in the army, and I kept calling him Major Banks until, growing annoyed, he rounded on me with, "Excuse me, Captain, my name is Marchbanks." No doubt the correct thing to do with a major is to make him march,' said he, grinning from ear to ear over his vile pun, 'but if major's to be called march, why isn't it spelt march?'

'What do you think of Trevelyan?' said I. He reflected, and said he doubted if he should be able to remember it, and asked me to give him something in the nautical line. But nothing that I could think of as belonging to a ship or the sea would satisfy me; so, after a number of suggestions, we fixed upon Egerton, as having an aristocratic sound and being easy to pronounce.

On the whole, my friend did not seem so much astonished by my scheme as I had expected; but this might be because sailors see so many strange things, and pass through so many curious adventures, that the faculty of being amazed is soon worn out in them. We continued for some time talking about the voyage and Miss Damaris Hawke and other matters; and I then went to look at the unlet cabins, and, after peering and considering, decided upon taking No. 4, it being the roomiest of those which remained

unhired, and for that reason safe to choose on the chance of some fellow sharing it with me.

'Will you come aboard in the docks or at Gravesend?' asked Thompson.

'In the docks,' I replied. 'If the Hawkes don't join you at Gravesend, we may take it that they are not going to Australia in the *Strathmore*.'

'Ay,' he replied, 'for when we leave Gravesend we go clean away to Australia, I hope. You may certainly take it as you say, that if they don't join the ship at Gravesend they've either postponed the voyage or abandoned it.'

'Then, of course, I shall go ashore again,' said I.

'What!' cried he, 'forfeit your passage-money and the delight of eighty or ninety days of sea and my society!'

I laughed and said, 'But there's no use supposing they won't come. Hawke's not a man to send your Company a cheque unless he meant to get something for it.'

'If it is to depend upon the aunt,' he said, 'you need not fear of being disappointed. She likes the ship and she likes me, and I now recollect that when we were in the Channel she asked me if there was any chance of my taking the same mates and stewards next time, as she thought the former very *safe* gentlemen to sail with, and the stewards she considered extremely attentive. That looks as if she had made up her mind even then. Depend upon it, she'll come if she can.'

I asked who the mates were, but he gave me names which were unknown to me. I then took a turn over the vessel, and having spent pretty nearly two hours aboard, I bade my old shipmate good-bye, begging him as he valued my happiness and prospects to behave with extreme circumspection when I joined the vessel; never on any account to let it be supposed that I had been at sea as a sailor, but to let the passengers imagine that he called me Jack because we had known each other as boys; and I wound up by asking him to come and spend a day with me at the West End. But this he said he could not manage, as his wife and children were in the country, and he meant to pass a few days with them, and when he returned his hands would be too full of business for visiting.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOODWINKING.

I WILL spare you an account of the thoughts with which I beguiled my ride home and the various reflections which kept me as restless as a buoy in a seaway. So far everything had been plain sailing; Daniel Thompson had proved to be my old shipmate, and

the man of all others whom I would have chosen to go to sea with on such an errand as mine ; a berth had been secured by Aunt Damaris and Florence, and half the passage-money paid ; and the only fly in this pleasant pot of ointment with which I was greasing the *ways* of my courtship was the fear that at the last moment Hawke might change his mind and keep Florence at home.

However, my business was to go on steering a straight course and take my chance of the wind holding steady ; and accordingly, on my return home from the docks, I forwarded the necessary deposit money to Duncan, Golightly, & Co. for cabin No. 4, and signed myself 'John Egerton,' feeling a trifle uncomfortable perhaps as I did so, though surely my conscience was needlessly sensitive, for I was as guiltless of all wrongdoing in assuming a name as any actor who puts on a wig and runs upon the stage and calls himself the Duke of Gloucester.

A few days after I had visited the *Strathmore* I went down to Clifton. Hearty as was my respect for my uncle's character, I never could think of him as a man capable of holding his peace, and I was in constant fear that he would betray my project to his wife, and that the news would reach Florence, and perhaps old Hawke. But I was mistaken ; he was as secret as the grave. He had not only not given his wife or daughters the least hint of the truth, but he assured me that he had done his best to dismiss the thing from his own mind, that he might humbug his conscience into believing that he was as ignorant as the others.

'I want,' says he, 'to be able not only to look but to *feel* innocent when the truth comes out, so that should Mr. Hawke call upon me or send me an impertinent letter, I shall be able to talk to him with the sense of being an injured man.'

This policy in him suited me perfectly, and I begged him to ask me no more questions about my schemes, 'for the more I talk,' said I, 'the more you are obliged to know ; whereas if nothing be said you cannot be sure, even whilst we now converse, that I am still bent on going to Australia.'

'You're right,' he replied, 'and so we'll confine ourselves to Punch and Judy or the weather ;' though for all that his curiosity was so sharp set that I believe he would have been glad to take his chance of his conscience had I offered him the least encouragement to make inquiries.

However, as I have said, it answered my purpose very well to keep him silent and ignorant. I was a bachelor, but I knew what married people are, and how if a wife comes to suspect that her husband is hiding anything from her she will never rest till she has it out of him. But I had a very difficult part to play with Sophie ; so difficult that it drove me back to London next day and determined me to visit them no more this side my voyage, though but for that I should have been glad to eke out the time

that remained by spending a week at Clifton, where I could have kept myself posted in all the latest news about the Hawkes' movements. The fact is, both Sophie and Amelia expected to find me miserably disconsolate, and I reckoned that Florence would either suspect my sincerity as a lover or guess that I had some scheme on hand if I was not reported to her by my cousins as being broken down. Consequently I had to put on the look of a man whose heart is bleeding, and no harder job did I ever undertake, especially whenever my uncle, who saw into my motive, was looking, for there would be a grin in the cock of his eye that made a sentimental countenance an enormous achievement.

Yet somehow I managed so well that my cousins honestly believed I was in a wretched state of mind, and Sophie did all she could to cheer me. She told me (the moment she had an opportunity of speaking to me alone) that she had met Florence soon after her return from the North in company with her sister, who was in a bath chair, and had walked with her for nearly half an hour, scarcely noticing Emily, who was very cool, and talking to Florence in order to get all the news she could for me.

'I hope you told her,' said I, in my most melancholy manner, 'that her going to Australia was an awful blow to me.'

'I did, Jack,' she replied. 'I said that if your heart was not broken outright it was because you believed that separation would not alter her, and that she would bring back the same loving loyal heart she took with her and renew your chance of proving your devotion. "Before I come back," said she, "I dare say he will have found out that he mistook his feelings; he is very young, Sophie. And indeed," said she, sighing so prettily, Jack, "he ought not to wait nor give me a thought when I am gone, for who knows whether I shall ever return?"'

I groaned so heavily at this that for the moment I was afraid from the look Sophie gave me that she considered it almost too full of anguish to be honest. But an uneasy conscience is always putting wrong constructions upon things.

'I answered,' continued Sophie, 'that though you were young you were old enough to be staunch, and I begged her not to leave England without giving me some token for you to remember her by—something for you to go on wearing until she came back.'

'What did she say to that?' I asked.

'Why, that she would send me something for you; it hasn't come yet, but the moment it arrives you shall have it.'

This moved me to a degree that made the tremor in my voice real enough. Indeed I was as much touched by this proof of Sophie's fidelity to me as I was stirred and affected by Florence's promise as an indication that I had made greater progress into the darling's heart than I had dared to hope. I squeezed my cousin's hand and thanked her tenderly for her suggestion to

Florence, and then asked if there was any chance of Mr. Hawke changing his mind and keeping his daughter at home. No; she was afraid that there was no chance at all. Florence had told her that every preparation was being made for the voyage, their cabin was secured and they would join the ship at Gravesend. She said that Florence could not make head or tail of her father's resolution; she never remembered speaking about me or behaving in any way to account for such an extreme step as sending her all the way to Australia. The suggestion came from Aunt Damaris, and was immediately seized by Mr. Hawke; and she could not account for his conduct, for his willingness to lose her society at home and subject her to the risk of a long voyage, unless something more than Mr. Jack Seymour was at the bottom of her father's reasons for sending her away.

'Did she give you any idea of what that something more might be?' I asked very anxiously.

'No, she has no suspicion. For my part, I believe her father's sole motive is to separate her from you. She declares that she has never said anything about you to him to account for his alarm. But how does she know? Feelings will leak out insensibly; her father may see more than she herself suspects she shows or even possesses. The wonder to me is that Florence should make no stand; that she shouldn't bluntly refuse to be driven to the other end of the world. But I suppose she is sincere when she says she likes the idea of revisiting Sydney, and no doubt she is not very happy at home just now: and then, again, she shows proper dignity in coldly and uncomplainingly obeying her papa and accompanying her aunt. And who knows, Jack, that she would not be willing to go to the North Pole if by making such a journey she could get rid of that worrying, fortune-hunting creature Morecombe?'

At this point we were interrupted and had to break off; nor was I sorry, for it was desperately hard to maintain an air of misery when alone with Sophie, whose sympathy was bound to render her uncommonly shrewd: and besides, conjectures as to Hawke's intentions were exceedingly unprofitable, seeing that all I required to be satisfied upon was, that Aunt Damaris and Florence meant to sail to Sydney in the *Strathmore*.

Well, lads, as I have said, I returned to London next day, because I was but a clumsy hand at masquerading, and was sure that my cousins would find me out if I did not look sharp and haul off. Sophie seemed a good deal struck by my impatience to be gone, and expressed her surprise that I did not stay, if only for the chance of seeing Florence before she left England.

'Do you think,' cried I, 'that I could say good-bye to my darling who leaves with a misgiving that we may never meet again? Sophie, I could not control myself—the trial would be

too much for me. No! tell her, should you meet, why I hurried away: and above all let me have whatever she desires me to remember her by when you get it.'

Whether this satisfied Sophie I did not trouble myself to find out. I knew that whatever might be her thoughts I should right myself when she came to hear that I had sailed with Florence in the *Strathmore*, and meanwhile my business was to keep my plan secret. So before leaving my relations I told my uncle not to expect to see me at Clifton again, as the obligation to play a hypocritical part was altogether too hard, and I felt that every sham sigh I heaved was an outrage upon Sophie's affectionate, faithful nature.

'All right, my boy, do as you please,' said he; 'but I hope you'll send us a letter from Gravesend to let us know you're gone.'

'Certainly!' I answered.

'And, on reflection,' he continued, 'I think you had better address your letter to me, telling me your motive in going, and so on, as though I knew nothing about it. It will be something to flourish before old Hawke should he trouble me; and it will throw your aunt off the scent, for I don't want her to know that I was all along in your confidence.'

This I promised to be sure to do, and then as we were alone I bade him good-bye, for unless he came to see me in London we should not meet again before I sailed. I had never said farewell to my father when I started on a voyage with more emotion than I felt as I held my uncle's hand. And yet so far as words went it came, between us, to no more than a brief 'God bless you.' Nevertheless I had to linger awhile to recover myself before seeking my aunt and cousins; and though there was little apparent significance in my manner as I took my leave of them, I assure you it was a bitter wrench to say good-bye to Sophie lightly, as though we were to see each other soon, when, could I have had my way, I should have hugged her, and told her we might not meet for months, and perhaps years, and thanked her again and yet again for all that she had done for me, for all she would like to do for me, for her loyal good wishes and sisterly pride in me.

And now having got back to London, nothing remained but to lay in a stock of such articles as I required for the voyage, and wait for the 28th of the month to arrive. I had not many arrangements to make: indeed, the list was completed when I had bought a good box upon which I had 'John Egerton' painted, and put my clothes and purchases in it, and when I had given notice to quit my lodgings to the landlady. And note here: it took me over half an hour to persuade the woman that I was in earnest, and bound to the other end of the world. I was so much a part of her house that she had come to look upon me as she did her front door and staircase, and when she understood that I was in

earnest and really going, she sat down upon the floor and wept there.

It was on this day that the post brought me a small parcel, which on opening I found to contain a little square box and a letter. In the box was a locket with a wisp of gold-brown hair coiled up in it, and the letter was from Sophie telling me that the locket was my sweetheart's parting gift. 'I may tell you,' wrote Sophie, 'that Florence quite implied she would have liked to give you this herself, by which you may judge she is not a little disappointed, and perhaps *pained*, by what I had to call your "incapacity" to bid her good-bye. However, if she understands your reason and you are satisfied, it is not for me to lecture you, though I may as well declare, if I were going to Australia and my lover had not the heart to say farewell to me, I should leave with the feeling that if I chose to fall in love with somebody else across the sea, I might do so safely.'

This was a snub to my tremendous young sincerity that set me gaping to speak out, but I restrained myself on reflecting that in a very few days both she and Florence would know the truth. So all that I did was to acknowledge the receipt of the locket in a few lines, saying that my heart was too full to write at length, and that the only answer I could return to her reference to my incapacity to say good-bye to Florence was to ask her to wait until my darling girl came home, and then judge whether I had remained staunch, and whether my behaviour was of a kind to justify Florence in falling in love with anybody else.

This letter being posted, I purchased a riband for the locket, and hid the little keepsake away under my waistcoat, so proud and happy in the possession of this thing that I cannot recall my delight without sorrowfully reflecting that before I could ever again enjoy pleasure so pure my boyish heart must return to me, and I must be loving my first love as I loved her then, when the morning of life was around and the shadows upon the dew leaned into the west.

CHAPTER XIX.

I EMBARK.

MONDAY, September 28, 18—. This was the day fixed for the sailing of the *Strathmore*, and I had ascertained from the owners, to whom I had forwarded the balance of the passage money, that if I meant to join the ship in the docks I must be on board not later than eleven o'clock in the morning. I had sent my luggage down on the previous Friday, and, Monday being arrived, I bade my landlady farewell, and, armed with a large carpet-bag

in which were stowed the few conveniences I immediately required, I jumped into a cab and was driven to Fenchurch Street Station. I had had so much time in which to thoroughly think over the resolution I had formed to accompany Florence to Sydney, taking my chance of what might follow when we were landed on Australian soil, that, now that the hour I had so long looked forward to was arrived and I had practically embarked, as I may say, on my wild and singular undertaking, I set about the job of joining the ship with the same cool deliberateness of mind I should have possessed had I been going in her as mate for seven or eight pounds a month, or as a passenger bound on some commercial errand.

It was about half-past ten o'clock when I reached the ship, and the scene of life raised up in me such a flavour of my old calling that I felt as if I had no business to be going leisurely aboard, but ought to be tumbling about the decks, shouting out orders, and seeing all ready for hauling out of dock. The *Strathmore* was now in regular sea-going trim, loaded down to well above the line of her yellow sheathing, all yards across and the sails bent, the long-boat full of live-stock, the hencoops along the poop crammed with poultry; huge squares of compressed hay (which flung a farmyard smell upon the air), secured near the main rigging, blue peter floating lazily at the fore, the Company's house flag at the main, and the English ensign at the peak. The main deck was full of people, steerage and 'tween-deck passengers and their friends conversing in groups, and waiting for the inevitable signal for separating. The scene was a familiar one to me, and yet I found myself, as I stepped over the gangway, glancing with perfectly fresh interest at the old picture of here a young woman silently crying; there a family of father, mother, and little children gathered round the aged couple who had made a weary journey to see the poor hearts off, and who would find the return home wearier still; yonder an ill-clad man standing with his arms folded, looking at the ships which lay around, his haggard face giving you a good image of the dejected, doubting, harassed mind inside him. The *Strathmore* was not an emigrant ship, but she had accommodation in her 'tween decks, between the steerage bulkhead and the mainmast, for a few poor people who were charged emigrants' fares and went out as emigrants; and, consequently, her deck on this day presented all the interest of an emigrant vessel: and I don't know whether in all this world there is any sight to equal the scene a ship bound on a long voyage offers just before the steam-tug lays hold of her, and whilst passengers and their friends are mingled on her decks. There are the little children gaping about them full of wonder; there are relatives holding on to one another's hand in a grasp that once relaxed may never again be felt; you hear sounds of sobbing and

the painful echo of laughter between, the hoarse voices of men, the sharp feverish chatter of women striving to put as much talk as might fill up a day into these last ten minutes; and dock officials yell directions to Jack who is sprawling about on the fore-castle, drunk, and singing and grinning and lurching here and there, with a kind of defiant rolling, as if he would have you take notice that he for one doesn't mean to make a blubbing job of this leave-taking; whilst overhead the great spars and masts tower into the dusty blue and look ponderous pieces of furniture now that all the sea-gear is rove and the sails bent and rolled up; and they set you thinking of the pallid heights of canvas they will be presently uprearing, and of the night that shall come down by-and-by upon the distant sea, amid which this same ship will be heaving slowly, with never a sound rising from her heart wherein those men and women and children shall be slumbering, with a thousand fathoms of water betwixt them and the bottom of the black profound whose surface is full of starlight.

I ran my eye along the poop, but did not see Captain Thompson, and as the mates were strangers to me, I thought I could not do better than turn to and set my cabin in order, and write a letter to my uncle ready for posting at Gravesend. There was nobody at that moment in the cuddy, though I could hear a stir in the steerage, the sounds coming very plainly up the hatchway. I stood a moment looking along and, thought I, 'If I could see one of the stewards now, I would ask him if the Hawkes' luggage was in their cabin;' then I said to myself, 'Better not ask questions, Jack, for you never can tell what may not set Aunt Damaris putting two and two together. Look for yourself.'

Whereupon, putting my bag upon the table, I marched to No. 6 cabin, knocked, received no answer, tried the handle, found the door unlocked, and peeped in.

A single glance was enough: one side of the cabin was full of boxes, parcels, &c., with Miss D. Hawke and Miss F. Hawke plainly painted or written on them. The sight of these traps was the same as seeing the owners, so far as the certainty of their sailing in the *Strathmore* was concerned; and closing the door, I came away, picked up my bag, and entered my own cabin.

The light was feeble, owing to the scuttle or window being in the shadow of the quay wall, but, nevertheless, I was able to see that I was not to have the cabin to myself. Luggage that did not belong to me stood near my box, and in the bunk under mine was a collection of articles including a waterproof coat, a gun-case, a bundle consisting of an umbrella, a walking-stick, a sword-stick, &c. I was a good deal disappointed, as I had reckoned upon being alone. Evidently the *Strathmore* was taking out a full complement of passengers. The consideration now was, what

sort of companion was I to have? A cheerful, amiable fellow, whose society would be a pleasure, or a sea-sick growling old hunks whose company would be a perpetual affliction?

I peered at the things in the bunk, and then noticing a name painted on the top of a box somewhat resembling mine, I bent down to see what it was, and read in large white letters:

‘Reginald Morecombe, Esq.,
Cabin Passenger. Per *Strathmore*.’

I could hardly credit my senses. I stood up and stared around me, then took another squint at the card, and, lost in amazement, looked at the traps in the bunk, and came once more to the card. ‘Reginald Morecombe!’ There it was plain enough, and I stood erect, absolutely dumbfounded. But, stop! how was I to be sure without seeing the fellow that *this* Reginald Morecombe was Florence’s admirer? Might there not be another man of that name among the millions who populate Great Britain, and through the operation of one of those strange conjunctions of circumstances which sometimes happen in this life, might not he have chosen the *Strathmore* to sail to Australia in, and had the half of my cabin allotted him? I examined the boxes, but not being able to see inside them, I found nothing more suggestive than the name. I then overhauled the traps in the bunk, but there was nothing to be learnt by looking at the gun-case and the macintosh. Nevertheless, though I could not have taken my oath that my companion would prove Mr. Hawke’s young friend, I was so perfectly convinced in my own mind he was nobody else, that I was as much confounded, annoyed, and nonplussed as if I had entered the cabin and found the man in bed in it.

Was this the explanation of Hawke’s singular willingness to send his daughter away on a long voyage? Did he hope by boxing up her and Morecombe for three or four months in a ship that the young fellow would succeed in worrying the girl into accepting him? Was it Aunt Damaris’ scheme? *She* would be here, at all events, to help the youth, and her house would be open to him at Sydney. And did Florence know he was to accompany them? If not, why there would be positive *baseness* in her father’s scheme to make the *Strathmore* a mere trap for her. But if, on the other hand, she knew all about it, why did she keep the news from Sophie? Why had she sent me a keepsake to remember her by, and messages to cherish, when all the time she was aware that she was going to Australia in company with the man whom her father had chosen for her to marry?

I sat on my box with my forehead in my hand and my mind in a whirl. Voices were bawling on deck, feet were stamping

overhead, people were moving about in the cuddy. I knew by the cries which reached me that we should be warping out of dock in a few minutes, and such was the state of bewilderment into which I had been flung by the conviction that my cabin-mate was to be no other than Hawke's young friend, by the astonishing pertinacity old Hawke was exhibiting, by the determination of Mr. Morecombe, who was going to abandon society for sea-sickness and a long voyage in the hope of winning Florence, and by the fear that the girl had all along known he was to join her and her aunt, that I declare for some moments it was just the spin of a coin whether I should jump ashore, send for my traps at Gravesend, and drop all thoughts of Florence as completely as I abandoned the voyage.

This was my mood, when, casting my eyes towards the bunks, which were built one above the other, the absurdity of the situation in which Morecombe and I would be placed by occupying one cabin and sleeping one atop of the other, struck me; I burst into a fit of laughter and roared so lustily that I came very near to choking. And nothing, I believe, could have done me more good; the flood of merriment seemed to cleanse my mind and leave room for the old devil-may-care spirit to assert itself again.

Without more ado I opened my box, bundled such things as I required to have at hand into one of the two small chests of drawers with which that cabin was furnished, and then, pulling out a writing-case, began a letter to my uncle. When it came, however, to using a pen and collecting my thoughts, I found I was rather too agitated to say much. I opened by telling him I was going to Australia, and why, as though he had known nothing of my intentions, and then went on to say that I was on board, that the Hawkes' luggage was in their cabin, and that some baggage labelled 'Reginald Morecombe' was in *my* cabin. I could not yet positively declare that this Reginald Morecombe was Hawke's friend, but I would let him know in a postscript when the man came aboard at Gravesend. 'If he proves to be Florence's admirer,' said I, 'you will understand, and especially will Sophie appreciate, the profound cunning old Hawke exhibits by this manœuvre. I only hope that Florence is ignorant of the plot: unhappily I shall not be able to tell you how this is, for I am not likely to see her until we have been some time under way. If in my postscript I inform you that my cabin companion is *the* Reginald Morecombe, please take the earliest opportunity of letting old Hawke know that I have sailed in the *Strathmore*.' I then wound up by thanking him for his kindness, and begging him to ask Sophie's forgiveness of me for concealing from her my intention to accompany Florence, and brought my letter to an end with a proper sentimental flourish.

Having finished that job, leaving the envelope open for the postscript I had promised, I put on my hat and shoved my head out of the cabin-door to see who might be about before boldly issuing forth, since for all I could tell Florence might have come aboard whilst I was below. True, I had understood she was to join the ship at Gravesend, but her aunt might have changed her mind and chosen to start from the dock: anyhow, I could not be sure, and the very last thing I wanted was to plump up against the darling unawares, and frighten her before her aunt or anybody else into a betrayal of our being 'auld acquaintance'; and so, I say, I peered out cautiously, saw a group of persons talking near the companion steps, and an under-steward in a camlet jacket rubbing the table. But there was nobody I knew in sight; I therefore walked on to the main-deck, and found to my surprise that we were out of the dock and in the river, and that a tug had got hold of us and was canting our head towards midstream.

I walked a short distance forward so as to be able to see who was on the poop before going there. Most of the 'tween-deck and steerage folks were below, but a few had clambered on to the bulwarks, and a knot of them stood on the forecastle waving their hats and handkerchiefs to their friends who stood on the walls and pierheads watching the noble ship start. I took a good look aft, and seeing nothing but strange faces, saving Dan Thompson, who stood alone listening to the bawling of the mud pilot, and watching, without of course taking any part in the busy scene, I mounted the poop ladder and went up to my friend.

'Hallo, Jack!' cried he, gripping my fingers heartily; 'I was only just now thinking of you and wondering whether you were aboard. When did you come?' I told him. 'Whisper,' says he, 'what's the name I am to call you by? Confound me if I can recollect it; something to do with edge, hadn't it?'

'Egerton—Jack Egerton,' I replied; 'and for heaven's sake, Daniel, don't go and forget it. Think of edging down; that's nautical, you can't forget that.'

'No, no, Egerton—Jack Egerton—I have it now,' said he. 'Be easy; Egerton's the word.'

'Since I've been aboard,' said I, 'I've been rendered doubly anxious by one of the most bothersome things happening that ever you could imagine. I was in hope of getting a cabin to myself, and I find I'm to have a companion.'

'Well, and what does that mean?' cried he, with a broad grin on his jolly nautical red face; 'merely that Dan Thompson's a mighty popular skipper, beloved of ladies and gentlemen. Would you have me sail with unlet cabins? And besides, how many bunks does an old lobsconser like you want to sleep in?'

'That's not it,' I replied; 'I don't object to a companion. But guess who he is to be?'

'Pooh, pooh! out with it, man; how the dickens can *I* guess?

'When I spoke to you of the business that's bringing me on this voyage, did I tell you,' said I, 'that there was a young chap named Morecombe wanted by my sweetheart's father as a husband for my pet.'

'Did you?—may be, may be. And what then?'

'Why, smother him, Daniel, his luggage is in my cabin—he's to be—not my bedfellow, thank heaven, but he is to lie in the bunk under me. The old man has hoped to make a rat-trap of your ship for his girl. He's planned the voyage for her, that young Morecombe may be in her company all the while you keep at sea and after you've set us ashore. And as if that's not enough,' cried I, savagely dwelling upon the baseness of the plot (as if I, lads, were the most innocent of beings, and not in the smallest degree working out a very much more audacious scheme), 'he's to share my cabin and I'm to have the privilege of hearing him snorting under me in his sleep for seventy or eighty days.'

Daniel burst into a loud laugh. 'What'll you do, Jack?' he exclaimed, 'since he's to be under you, will you contrive to smother him one night? Your bunk-planks are movable, you know, and there's nothing to prevent you coming down upon him. Pity your mattress isn't a feather bed;' and he broke into another long guffaw.

At this moment the pilot roared out an order to the wheel, and my friend ran to the rail to peer at something ahead, and there he stood, clean forgetting all about my troubles and thinking only of his ship. It was scarcely the right moment to bother him, though I was determined, before we brought up at Gravesend, to have my way with him in something I required him to do. So I hauled off and went and sat on the edge of the after skylight to think a bit, and to have a look at what was going on. And plenty there was to see, as there always is on the Thames, which is the noblest river in the world to my mind. I have been upon African and Indian and South American rivers, and beheld a thousand strange and shining beauties, and in China have slept on a rushing stream amid a crowd of wobbling and straining junks, with a glimpse of temples beyond the outlandish trees, and a soft wind sighing under the sharp hard blue of the sky, and smells about as aromatic as the materials which go to the making of a plum-pudding. But the scenery of the Thames is the work of human hands, and that's the impressive part of the noble old stream. Gaze along it in an atmosphere of yellow light, when magnitude and vagueness are given to the leagues of waterside structures, and when objects gloom upon the dun horizon and cheat you with the idea of immensity by the remoteness they take. The *Strathmore's* flying-jibboom was looking right over the square stern of the tug, and we were swarming down the bend which

bears the polite name of Bugsby's Reach. And hereabouts was no lack of life on that day; there were half a score of big vessels in this Reach coming or going, whilst lighters crept by broadside on, tugs sped along in quest of towage jobs, passenger steamers drove through the steel-coloured water, with a glancing of silver at their keen stems, and a whirl of snow sluicing in a broad current from under their counters. I took notice of a big India steamship leisurely making for Gravesend, trim as a man of war, her sides and funnel spotless, her scuttles winking like stars in her as she coiled her ebony length along the southern sunshine and rounded eastwards into Woolwich Reach, whilst, towing past her for London, there came a small full-rigged ship from the other side of the world, her brave little hull covered with scars of the conflicts she had fought in distant seas, her canvas clumsily rolled up, her gear grey from constant wetting and drying, and the crew on the forecastle pointing out to one another the familiar scenes ashore.

This is one of the contrasts the noble river gives you. And look yonder at the familiar Thames wherry, with the old waterman resting on his oars and squinting over his shoulder at the passing tug in whose tumble, as the steamer rushes past, the little boat flounders and wallops, and sets the old chap's oars flourishing like a pair of knitting-needles in a woman's hand, whilst his hat shortens and enlarges with the reeling as if he wanted to show all observers what an optical illusion was like. And hark now to the panting of that little screw tug that heads up river with a chain of deeply-laden coal barges in her wake, and see the lazy grimy villain atop of the dirty heaps, in shirt sleeves, a pipe in his mouth, and his sooty face to the sky.

Our voyage was begun on a fine bright day, if so be the hauling out of dock for Gravesend can be called the beginning. We were too near London for the azure overhead to be rich, but there was a gay autumn tone in it, with a lightening of the blue into a kind of silver over the furthest reaches of the south shore, against which every tree, house, and curve of land took a delicate black outline like a sketch in ink. The sunshine poured full upon our ship and put fiery lines into the yellow topmasts and topgallant-masts, and notched the skylights and the brasswork with flashing white stars; and the soft wind that followed carried the smoke of the tug along with us for a space until we rounded into Galleons Reach, when the dark coil floated away in a bluish shadow over Plumstead Marshes. There was a constant coming and going of figures upon the main deck, with sad-hearted faces overhanging the rail watching the passing land, and some drunken horseplay of sailors upon the forecastle, where stood the chief mate of the ship ready to echo the pilot's orders to the tug.

A few of the cuddy passengers had joined the vessel in the

docks and sauntered about the poop. I took notice of what was unmistakably a newly married pair; they kept together arm in arm, and the husband showed his wife the card in the binnacle, the pump for washing down betwixt the mizzenmast and the skylight, the quarter boats and the captain's gig over the stern, with the air of a man who meant to get his honeymoon out of everything that came in his road. There was an elderly gentleman of a stern cast of countenance, who walked about with his hands behind him, and every now and again he would come to a stand and cast a look aloft in a manner that made me suspect he knew the difference between the head-pump and the poop-downhaul. I afterwards found him to be Captain Jackson, R.N., going to Sydney, with his wife, on some government business. There were other persons standing about the poop and looking at the brilliant river-show, but I did not give them much attention, having more interesting subjects to occupy my mind with. And do you ask me if there was any yearning in my bowels after the old city we were leaving in our wake, and the soil that was dropping astern fathom by fathom as the tug hauled us onwards? Not an atom, my lads. Had I been leaving a wife or a mother, or some one dear to me, why then of course my face would have been as melancholy as the longest and yellowest of the visages among the third-class passengers. But I was outward bound, in the vessel that was to carry the darling of my heart to Australia. I was going for a sail around the world, not as a poor devil who had to haul upon ropes or keep a look-out with his eye against a snow-squall, but as a cuddy passenger who was to eat the best that was in the ship, sleep in all night, and go below when it rained. If I was thoughtful, it was because I was puzzled and worried by the discovery that young Morecombe was going to make one of our happy family, not because I was leaving England, or because I was afraid of being sea-sick.

Well, by-and-by we were abreast of Erith, floating pleasantly along, the sky hollowing over our mastheads into a deeper tint, and the ship making a noble show upon the broadening stream, with a certain rugged heavy appearance aloft that handsomely fitted her deep trim and the appearance of the men and women who stared over her bulwarks. An outward-bounder she was from the vane above the truck to the line of white water which the wheels of the tug swept under her glittering figurehead and along her glossy bends, and I sat looking at the massive yards lying square upon the towering masts, and at the fretwork of shadows cast by the fore shrouds upon the galley and the longboat, and thought of one day when the North-east Trades had breezed up into half a gale of wind, and when I leaned over the jibboom with my hand upon the outer jibstay and saw such another vessel as this rushing at me under a maintopgallant sail

set over a single-reefed topsail, sending the surges boiling far ahead of me with every downward crash of the shearing cutwater and flinging a continuous roll of thunder upon the gale out of the iron-hard hollows of her white canvas.

Thompson had been talking to a middle-aged lady with an Irish accent, and when they separated I went up to my friend and said, 'Daniel, can you listen to me for three minutes?'

'Certainly,' he answered; 'I must apologise for interrupting you just now, but didn't you notice the dumb-barge right in the road of the tug? Those things are the curse of the river. Captains' lives are made up of nothing but actions brought against them by barge owners. What is it you have to say, Seymour?'

'Egerton, man—Egerton! Didn't I exhort you not to mistake?' cried I.

'Look here, Jack,' says he, 'Egerton be blowed! I shall never be able to remember it, and therefore to make sure I must call you Jack and nothing else. You can say I'm a cousin, if you like, a foundling adopted by your parents, a foster-brother, half a twin, anything you choose. But I'll bungle Egerton as sure as your name's Seymour; so Jack it must be between us, and I'll leave you to account for the familiarity.'

'If you can't call me Egerton, then I must be Jack,' said I; 'there's no familiarity, and consequently any accounting for it would be a mistake. And now I'm going to ask you to do me a favour. When we reach Gravesend and I catch sight of Miss Hawke coming aboard, I must go and hide, for fear that, should she see me, her astonishment might lead her aunt to suspect who I am.'

'But don't the aunt know you?' asked Thompson, who had evidently forgotten the story I had given him in the docks.

'No,' I answered. 'She has never seen me nor have I ever set eyes on her. Morecombe I once caught sight of, but I am unknown to him.'

'And does Miss Hawke know you?' said he.

'Why, hang it all, my good Daniel,' cried I, 'didn't I tell you that she was half in love with me, that I was passionately in love with her, and making this voyage for the sake of being with her and in the hope of inducing her to marry me?'

'Yes, yes, I remember now,' he added; 'and what is it you want me to do? You said something about hiding.'

'I said that when Miss Hawke heaves in sight I must go below. You must take the very first opportunity you can find to tell her privately that I am on board and beg her not to show any astonishment when I appear, and that you will introduce me to her as though I was a stranger.'

'What sort of a girl is she? I'm willing to oblige you,' said he, 'but hang it, Jack, you're now asking me to take liberties. What will she think when I beg her not to be astonished?'

'Do you think, Daniel,' said I, 'that I am likely to place an old friend like you in a false position? She will think that you are behaving very kindly to us both in cautioning her against allowing her surprise to betray me to her aunt.'

He took a few short turns up and down in front of me, with his good-natured red face working as though he was rehearsing the thing, and then said, 'Well, there can be no harm; I'll do this. When she arrives and a chance comes, I'll say, "There's an old friend of mine aboard—an old shipmate—named Jack Seymour!" She is sure to sing out, "What, Jack Seymour!" and I'll answer "Yes. He tells me he has the honour of your acquaintance, and has asked me to let you know he's aboard, in order that when he turns up you mayn't be frightened."'

'Not frightened, Daniel,' said I; 'surprised. All the rest will do capitally.'

'Surprised, then,' he continued. 'And then I'll say, "for reasons I've not troubled myself to ask, he tells me he's shipped under the name of Egerton, but as I can't reckon upon always remembering that name, I shall call him Jack. It's not my business," I'll say, "to inquire into names. All I've got to do is to carry my ship and the people in her safely across the ocean." I'll say that, Jack, to satisfy my own mind; no harm in it, I hope?'

'None whatever.'

'And what else is there to do?' said he.

'Why,' I replied, 'you can tell her that I've asked you to introduce me to her.'

I saw he did not like that, but instead of declining he said, 'What d'ye want to be introduced for? Go plump to her and ask her what she thinks of the weather. People don't stand on shore-going ceremonies at sea. You ought to know that, Jack.'

'Never mind that part of the job, Daniel. If you'll just tell her I'm aboard, and let me know when you have given her the news, I shall be eternally obliged to you.'

'All right, my lad, I'll do that,' said he, clapping me on the shoulder and laughing in my face; and then, taking a look round, he said something to the pilot and went below.

(To be continued.)

A New Theory of Sun-spots.

OF all the phenomena presented to the contemplation of astronomers, sun-spots are at once the most impressive and the most mysterious. On the face of that resplendent disc they seem, at a first view, mere dark marks of little import or interest. To the astronomers who first observed them, Fabricius, Scheiner, and Galileo, they were mere stains on the surface of an orb which earlier astronomers, confident in half-knowledge, had regarded as absolutely without spot or blemish. But so soon as their real features are noted, and the real dimensions of the sun's orb considered, their amazing significance is revealed; while, when their movements are examined, and the strange laws noted according to which they wax and wane in frequency, they are found to present problems as mysterious as they are fascinating.

I am about to advance a theory about sun-spots, or rather about their more salient features, which at least serves, whether right or wrong, to associate together some of the most remarkable facts which have been discovered respecting the sun and his surroundings.

Let us first consider the nature of that surface in which sun-spots make their appearance, and the phenomena which they present.

We are apt to regard the visible surface of the sun as if it were either the actual surface of this globe, or, at least, very near to that surface. On a little consideration, however, of the facts known to us, it will appear that this view is not correct. Strangely enough, the earth under our feet tells us the nature of the interior constitution of the sun, while the face of the sun himself even veils from view what lies deep down below it. The crust of the earth, studied by geologists, has spoken in the clearest terms of many millions of years of sun work at the sun's present rate of emitting heat and light. We may shorten our estimate of the time by assigning to the sun a greater activity in past times than now, or lengthen it by assuming that of yore he worked less effectively; but the result remains the same so far as our present inquiry is concerned; for it is the totality of sun

work, not time, we have to consider. Dr. Croll, of Glasgow, has shown, if not conclusively, yet with such high degree of probability that it would be far less safe to reject than to accept his conclusions, that the earth's crust tells of at least 100,000,000 years of sun's work. Sir Charles Lyell accepted the evidence as to all intents and purposes decisive.

Yet if this is so, a great difficulty immediately presents itself. The sun's energy in emitting light and heat results, so far as can be seen, almost wholly from the action of gravity in drawing in towards the centre the matter which forms the great aggregation we call the sun. That mysterious power which resides in matter adds this other reason to the reasons already strong, which make it the mystery of mysteries, that in it lies 'the promise and potency' of light and heat throughout the universe itself. Dr. Ball has already explained in these pages (*LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE* for November) how the contraction of the sun's mass provides, so to speak, for the constant expenditure of energy. But we can ascertain precisely how much energy could have been derived from the contraction of the sun's globe to its present apparent size, supposing its mass strewn with tolerable uniformity through an orb of that size. Of course the larger the original volume of the sun, the greater the amount of energy which might thus have been produced. But let us assign to the original globe of the sun the greatest possible volume—infinity of space. Of course the idea is not admissible as a conception, but it can quite readily be dealt with mathematically, and will manifestly give us a superior limit to the length of time we wish to determine. We find, in using this infinity of space, that the period deduced is but about 20,000,000 years. Taking, instead, an extension all round over half the distance separating the sun from the nearest star, we get very nearly the same result.

Here, then, there is manifestly something wrong. Our earth tells us one story, the sun seems to tell us another, I reject as absolutely inadmissible the suggestion for removing the difficulty by supposing that our sun's globe was formed by the collision of masses which had before been rushing with enormous velocities through space. All such ideas of collision appear simply preposterous to the astronomer who apprehends how enormously the distances separating star from star exceed the dimensions of individual stars. There is only one way of removing the difficulty, viz. by recognising the fact that the sun's apparent globe differs very much in size from his real globe. If the process of con-

traction has gone on very much farther than it seems to have done, then we can readily explain the awful vistas of past time of which our earth's crust tells us. We may safely conclude from this one argument alone that the sun's real globe is very much smaller than the orb we see.

But there is other evidence to the same effect. Professor G. H. Darwin has shown clearly that unless the central part of the sun were very much more compressed and dense than the parts near (say within fifty or a hundred thousand miles of) the apparent surface, there ought to be measurable flattening of the sun's polar regions. Now it is absolutely certain that there is no such flattening. All the observations made at Greenwich, Paris, Vienna, Washington, and other great observatories, agree in proving this. Therefore the central part of the sun is much denser than the outer parts, and doubtless the real globe of the sun is very much less than the globe we see.

There is also another proof of the same important fact in the behaviour of the spots themselves. It will fall presently under our notice.

What, then, is that visible surface which lies as a luminous veil far above the real surface of the solar globe?

The telescope shows the general surface of the sun as formed of multitudinous small round objects, intensely bright on a background which, though really bright, appears by contrast dark. These objects are only small in the sense that they look small as seen even with the most powerful telescopes. In reality, they average two or three hundred miles in length and breadth. Regarding those of nearly circular form as in reality spherical, the surface of one of these clouds (if so we are to regard them), 200 miles in diameter, would be about 125,000 square miles; so that in comparison with all such terrestrial objects as we can actually see and measure, they are of enormous size.

Now we can readily form an opinion as to the nature of these cloud-like masses—the so-called solar *rice-grains*—by considering what the spectroscope has told us about the vaporous atmosphere in which they float. This complex atmosphere indicates its presence alike in telescopic survey of the sun and in photographs of his disc, by the well-marked darkening towards the sun's edge. Analysed by the spectroscope, it is found to contain the vapours of iron, copper, zinc, aluminium, titanium, sodium, magnesium, and many other terrestrial elements, chiefly metallic. In other words, in the atmosphere of the sun the metals have the

same position which the vapours of water have in our own air ; so intense is the heat of the sun that iron, copper, zinc, and so forth (doubtless, in reality, all the metals, though not all in sufficient quantity to indicate their presence) are turned to the form of vapour. The clouds, then, that float in the atmosphere of the sun, are clouds in which drops of metal play the same part which drops of water play in our own clouds. We may describe the solar rice-grains, in fact, as mighty metallic clouds.

But here I would call attention to a consideration which seems to me of great importance in all inquiries into the sun's condition. The laws of gaseous pressure and density, as determined by experiments on the earth, are either modified under the conditions which exist in the sun, or else we cannot possibly regard the region of absorptive vapours certainly existing around the visible surface of the sun as of the nature of an atmosphere. From spectroscopic analysis we know that the pressure at which hydrogen exists just outside the sun's surface is much below the pressure of our atmosphere at the sea-level, yet certainly not so low as the thousandth part of that pressure. And whatever opinion we may form as to the effect of the intense heat prevailing close by the sun, we cannot overlook the influence of the enormous force of gravity at his surface. Under this force, more than twenty-eight times the force of gravity at the earth's surface, an atmosphere constituted like our own would double in pressure for every one-eighth of a mile of descent. Suppose that at the sun's surface a vaporous atmosphere such as he seems to have, an atmosphere constituted as the vaporous matter around him undoubtedly is constituted, doubled in pressure only once for every ten miles of descent. Then within the range of about 400 miles through which the sun's vaporous atmosphere has been observed (during total eclipse) to extend, there would be forty doublings, or the pressure, certainly not less than one-thousandth of our air's pressure, would be increased to more than *one thousand million times* the pressure of our air at the sea-level. Under such a pressure it would no longer be vaporous at all. Could it remain so, and obey the laws of gaseous matter, it would be many thousands of times denser than the densest metals known to us. Most assuredly no such pressure exists either at the sun's surface or thousands of miles below it. We can see to a depth of some 10,000 miles in the case of certain of the larger sun-spots.

We seem forced to the conclusion that the real atmosphere of the sun does not come anywhere near the surface we see, which,

according to this view, would be regarded as formed of cloudlike masses each with its surrounding of vapour, kept around it by such attractive energy as must necessarily reside in enormous aggregations of metallic globules such as these clouds must be. I am aware that this view will seem so strange, so unlike any that has heretofore been held, as to appear very daring. Yet it is infinitely more daring to overlook the enormous physical difficulties involved in the assumption that a continuous atmosphere surrounds the sun to a height of many hundreds of miles, while at the highest part of that self-luminous atmosphere the pressure is comparable with that of our own atmosphere at the sea-level.

Be this as it may (for the question has no direct bearing on the theory I am about to present), it is certain that under the action of various forces the solar rice-grains arrange themselves into groupings of varied form, in such sort that the general surface of the sun, when studied with a telescope not sufficiently powerful to show the separate rice-grains, presents a mottled aspect. Photography, which, as skilfully applied by Dr. Janssen, gives us the best views yet obtained of the details of the sun's surface, shows another reason for the mottled aspect, in the existence of a sort of network (varying even in form) of misty streaks where the rice-grains, though visible, are much less clearly defined than elsewhere. These blurred regions will doubtless find their explanation hereafter, as their changes of form come to be more closely studied.

But yet again, the surface of the sun is disturbed by forces producing more marked movements of the solar clouds. These get driven together into closely-packed streaks which, even in telescopes of very moderate power, are visible as exceedingly bright objects. They are the so-called *faculae* (named thus by Hevelius), from the Latin word for a torch, because of their brilliant aspect.

It is, however, when yet greater disturbances affect the cloud-laden region which forms the visible surface of the sun, that solar spots make their appearance. A region of disturbance, where many *faculae* are seen making the sun's surface look like a froth-streaked sea, shows suddenly in the middle of a dark region, round which the *faculae* appear at first as parts of nearly circular arcs. But they pass farther and farther away from the region of disturbance, the dark centre of which becomes better defined, and is presently seen to be bordered by a well-defined fringe of less darkness. Under close telescopic scrutiny this fringe (called

the *penumbra*), which, though less dark than the central part (called the *umbra*), is darker than the general surface of the sun, is seen to be marked by streaks extending radially from the centre of the nearly circular spot. Larger and larger the spot grows, gradually losing its circular form, but still well rounded on all sides. The centre is found to be darker than the rest of the *umbra*, appearing, indeed, absolutely black, but not necessarily so, since the glowing lime-light appears absolutely black when on the sun's disc as on a background. This central darkest region is called the *nucleus*.

After remaining, sometimes for several days, sometimes for weeks or even months, a spot begins to show signs of breaking up, if one can speak of the breaking up of what really indicates the absence, not the presence, of matter. It loses its rounded form, becoming perceptibly pear-shaped. Large portions of the facular regions around break their way in upon the sun, chiefly on the edge, which remains more rounded, forming often bright bridges—usually curved—from side to side of the spot. On either side of the smaller part (the stalk end of the pear) larger but less brilliant masses seem to move in upon the spot as though to cover it over with portions of the cloud-laden surface which had before been outside. These masses, as they move on, usually show widening dark streaks between them; and it is very noteworthy that on either side of these dark streaks there can be seen bright threadlike objects akin to the radial streaks around the *umbra*. But in the meantime these streaks, which had been originally radial and tolerably regular, have been tossed hither and thither as if irregular currents swept them in different directions. From the great masses thrown in on the dark background of the spot multitudinous filaments seem to stream in all directions, like fringe upon a storm-tossed banner.

More and more violently—pell-mell, as Secchi used to say—the luminous masses rush in upon the spot region. At last it is completely covered over, though bright facular streaks show where the great opening had been, and where intense disturbance is still going on. Sometimes these streaks break apart and a fresh spot is formed; and it has happened that twice or thrice a spot has been as it were renewed in this way. But usually the facular streaks become less and less marked, until at length the region where the spot has been can be in no way distinguished from the surrounding parts of the sun's surface.

Such is the history of a spot of the larger sort. Occasionally

there are peculiarities affecting the progress of some particular spot. For instance, there was the wonderful Cyclone Spot, seen by Secchi in 1857, the whole area of which was swept round as if by some mighty tornado. Again, there have been spots where a double tornado seems to have been in progress, the two whorls moving in opposite directions. In yet other cases there has been a whirling motion affecting the central part of the spot region in one direction, at one part of the spot's career, and in the contrary direction later. Other evidences also of exceedingly violent motion have from time to time been observed.

In smaller spots less marked signs of varying disturbance are noticed. The history of a small spot is comparatively uneventful. The chief interest in these lesser markings resides perhaps in the circumstance that to the unpractised observer they look very much like small planets in transit. For my own part I may express my conviction that every recorded case of intra-mercurial planets seen in transit is to be thus explained, from the case of Lescarbault's Vulcan down to the case of Vulcan's supposed return as seen in China; though the last-named is the only case in which a photograph of the sun chanced fortunately to have been taken at the right time, proving unmistakably that what had been described as unquestionably a planet, moving like a planet and unlike a sun-spot, was nevertheless a small sun-spot after all.

But there are yet some other circumstances which must be noted before we proceed to consider a theory of sun-spots.

The spots are limited to two zones on the sun's surface, corresponding to the sub-tropical and temperate zones on the surface of the earth. The existence of such zones implies necessarily the occurrence of rotational motion, whereby the position of the sun's poles and equator has been determined. It has been, in fact, by observing the spots that the axial position of the sun and his rate of rotation have been ascertained. But the movement of rotation, which seemed a comparatively simple matter when the first rough observations of Galileo and his contemporaries were in question, presents itself now as a complex phenomenon; for spots in high solar latitudes are found to indicate a rotation rate different from that determined by the observation of spots near the equator. The difference is so great as to become most perplexing when its real significance is considered. Judged by spots in the highest latitudes where spots have been seen on his face, the sun seems to rotate in about twenty-eight days. Judged by spots as near the equator as any have been

seen, he seems to rotate in about twenty-four days. His real globe cannot well rotate save as a whole and in a single period; yet, judged by what looks like his surface, his equatorial regions seem to rotate seven times, while the mid-zones of his northern and southern hemispheres rotate only six times. Regarding the slower rate for a moment as the true rate of the sun's rotation, it would appear as though the visible equatorial regions gained one entire rotation on the surface beneath them in 168 days. Now the sun's circumference is in round numbers about 2,660,000 miles, so that the mere gain of the whole equatorial zone takes place at the rate of nearly 16,000 miles per day, or about 650 miles per hour. Thus, viewing the varying rotation rate at the surface, we should have to recognise the existence of the most stupendous and far-ranging hurricane the mind can conceive.

We may fairly find in this amazing mobility another and simpler proof of what we have already seen to be demonstrated by subtler evidence, the vastness of the distance which separates the real surface of the sun from that visible surface which we call the photosphere.

One other point remains to be mentioned. The spots, besides being limited in space, are limited also in time. They cannot always be looked for with any probability that they will be seen. At this present time there are many spots on the sun's face. But if he is watched week after week during several coming years, it will be found that the spots grow fewer and fewer till none are seen. Then several weeks, or mayhap months, will pass during which no spots and few faculæ will be seen, when the mottling will be scarce discernible, and the darkness near the edge will be much less marked than usual. Then the spots will begin to return, will become more and more numerous till they attain their maximum frequency. Then they will diminish till they disappear, then return, then pass away again, and so on continually, waxing and waning with a sort of rhythmic flow. But the oscillation is not uniform. The average interval between two successive epochs of greatest spot frequency is a little greater than eleven years, but the interval has been as short as eight years and it has been as long as sixteen years.

Such being the most striking peculiarities of the sun-spots, let us see whether they can be associated together, some or all of them, by any theory as to the way in which these great openings in the luminous cloud region are formed.

In the first place, it may be fairly assumed that the real seat of the disturbance seen when a spot appears lies below the visible surface of the sun. There are, indeed, similar circumstances which seem at a first view to suggest that the disturbance has its origin from outside. If the spot period were of constant length, one might be led to suppose that some as yet undiscovered comet, having a period of about eleven years, and followed by a train of meteoric attendants, travels in an oval orbit intersecting the outlying cloud envelopes of the sun, and periodically with its flight of meteoric followers breaks through the region of luminous clouds. There are also certain peculiarities of sun-spots, noted by the late Mr. Richard Carrington, which have been held to indicate an external origin. But as none doubt that the real energies of the sun reside in that concealed mass which lies within the photosphere, hidden by a veil through which man can never hope to penetrate, and as the spots by their size and movements tell of most energetic disturbing forces, we must, it would seem, look for their origin where alone such forces are at work.

Again, if the origin of the spots is below the photosphere, and at the real surface of the sun, as the distance between this surface and the photosphere is enormous, we can hardly imagine any way in which forces exerted at the surface can affect the photospheric cloud region, unless they are directed with great energy radially from the sun's surface. In other words, it would seem that the forces at work in producing sun-spots are eruptional.

Now if we conceive the outburst of masses of strongly compressed and intensely heated gases from below the sun's real surface, and trace the result of their uprush, we are led to recognise certain phenomena, which certainly correspond well (be this explanation true or not) with what is seen on the sun. Even if the theory is incorrect, it has its value in thus associating together, as will be found, the various facts known about sun-spots, the coloured flames, and the solar corona.

Let us suppose that a great eruption begins deep down below the visible surface of the sun, imprisoned gases bursting their way forth, and in their outburst driving masses of solid or liquid matter like missiles through the distant photosphere. As the compressed vapours travelled onwards to regions of diminishing pressure, they would expand, cooling in the process, and drive away from all round the region where they reached the visible surface the clouds which had covered that region. At the beginning there would be a central space, from around which the

clouds were thus cleared over a continually widening area. Moreover, regarding the visible surface as part of a cloud stratum of great thickness (certainly not less than 10,000 miles in depth), it is clear that the constantly expanding masses of vapour, in their upward rush, would drive the higher parts of the cloud region farther apart than the lower portions. Thus looking squarely into the opening, from outside, as when we look at a spot near the centre of the sun's face from our terrestrial standpoint, we should obtain slant views of the cloud stratum.

Now the clouds which had before been spread uniformly over the scene of disturbance, being driven away from it upon the surrounding region, would necessarily be packed closely together, and so would form luminous streaks all around the spot—the faculæ, which, as we have seen, surround the disturbed region. The penumbra would show what lies underneath the photosphere, but not in its normal condition; for the mighty uprushing and side-thrusting masses of vapour would displace all parts of the cloud stratum, even as the outer parts are displaced and made to form facular streaks. Still we can form an idea, from the aspect of the penumbral fringe, respecting the normal condition of the inner parts of the solar cloud region. The radiating streaks, which are manifestly slant streaks of luminous matter below the clouds, seem to tell us clearly of streaks which had been vertical before the disturbance. We may compare what we see round the spot to what one would see in looking down upon a field of wheat (from a balloon, suppose) over a part of which a small but violent whirlwind was passing. All round the centre of disturbance the stalks of wheat would be driven aslant, and we should see them sloping radially around that centre. The ears of wheat belonging to the storm-bent stalks would be driven closer together than the ears elsewhere over the field, and so would form circular streaks around the region of disturbance, and outside the slant radial streaks. These circular streaks of compressed wheat-ears would look brighter than the rest of the field if the ears were in their golden prime. So the glowing solar clouds, urged together by the expansive action of the vapours poured into the spot region, form streaks looking brighter than the surrounding surface; while extending from them inwards, towards the spot's centre, are seen the streaks of luminous matter which before had been vertical. What these vertical streaks may be is not very easily determined. They may be down-rushing streams of molten metal from the sun's metallic clouds, or they may be uprushing columns

of glowing metallic vapours, capped by the clouds (as in our own air uprising streams of aqueous vapour are capped by cumulus clouds), or they may include both forms; however they are to be interpreted, it is certain they exist.

After a while the eruptive forces cease; the ejected vapours for a while continue to extend themselves around the region of disturbance, but not long. All the forces now called into action are such as tend to fill in again, and cover over, the region which had been disturbed. As the surrounding cloud-covered regions strive to rush in, contests arise between the in-rushing masses and the vapours within the spot region. In these conflicts cyclonic action may arise, and usually does. Sometimes a single cyclonic whirl is generated; at other times two or more, which may be in the same or different directions; while at yet other times, changes in the conditions under which the conflicts take place may cause a cyclone in one direction to be replaced by another in the contrary direction. Again, the enclosed vapours would maintain a better resistance and preserve the rounded form of the spot on that side towards which their motion urged them. On the other side, where the resistance would be less effective, cloud-laden masses from the solar photosphere would break in, or rather would be drawn in; and around this part of the disturbed region the photosphere would be more disturbed than elsewhere, and in many parts would be broken up.

The masses thus flung over or projected towards the region of the spot would be agglomerations of the luminous clouds with their vaporious surroundings and their filamentous appendages, which, in the more quiescent parts of the sun's surface, are usually (it may be presumed) nearly vertical. A mass of clouds driven on-wards as by a mighty but irregular hurricane would show its filaments as streamers from a wind-tossed pennon, as these luminous thread-like forms actually appear. Not parallel here, as around the edges of a yet youthful spot, the filaments would present an appearance more nearly resembling that of our cirrus clouds, with their wild mare's-tail streaks tossed seemingly hither and thither by the varying currents in our upper air. Indeed, Professor Langley, to whom we owe decidedly the best views of the various features of the sun's surface yet drawn, finds every form of solar cloud illustrated in the clouds of our own air. But though we may thus find illustrations of solar features, we must not imagine that therefore we have necessarily their true analogues. The vast difference of scale must be carefully kept in recollection. The

solar clouds, which seem simple rounded masses of luminous matter, are in reality vast cloud balls, two or three hundred miles in diameter; and doubtless, could we see them more clearly, would show amazing irregularities of structure where our present telescopes show uniformity. The filaments merely look like the thread-like forms which we see in our cirrus clouds; in reality they are forty or fifty miles in breadth, and some of them are fully 10,000 miles in length. Nothing that we know about our clouds enables us to form the merest guess as to the condition of such vast masses, such long streamers as these, or even to say that they are single masses or continuous streamers at all. And apart from all this, the intense heat which pervades the whole material of these seeming clouds and seeming streamers assures us that they are as unlike our clouds and cloud streamers in condition as they are in volume.

All that we can here say is that the sun-spots behave as though they were produced by the uprush of masses of vapour, caused by eruptive action far below the visible surface; for all the phenomena presented by a spot from its first formation to its final disappearance correspond to what might fairly be expected to result from such a process of formation. In passing, however, it may be noted as strong evidence in favour of the theory that sun-spots are due to the action of forces working below the visible surface, that they are regions of darkness and not of increased brightness. If sun-spots are produced in the way I have suggested, there would result great cooling from the expansive action of vapours which had been enormously compressed. On the other hand, if sun-spots had their origin from without, the bringing to rest of matter, meteoric or cometic, which had before been travelling with enormous velocity, would necessarily be accompanied by the generation of heat. Since the spots by their darkness and by the spectroscopic evidence of powerful absorptive action tell us that they are regions of cooling and not of greater heat, we may reasonably and safely infer that they are due to the action of forces working from within expansively, and not from outside with effects of compression.

But now let us see whether we may not find other evidence bearing on this theory of sun-spots, by looking outside the sun's surface for the effects, even as we have looked below for the cause of the disturbance to which they are due.

So soon as the coloured prominences had been shown by Lieutenant (now Colonel) Herschel, Janssen, Rayet, and others, to be

great masses of glowing gas, it became possible to observe them without waiting for total solar eclipses. Shining with special tints only, their light could, by spectroscopic dispersion, be brought into rivalry with only such light from the surrounding sky, or even from the sun himself, as is one of those tints. The totality of sunlight overwhelmingly surpasses the totality of prominence light; but red light from a prominence is not overwhelmingly surpassed by the red light of the same or very nearly the same tint, either from the sun or from the sunlit sky close by him. Thus, by keeping out all light save that of this special red tint of hydrogen, or if preferred the orange-yellow tint of helium, or either the indigo or the greenish-blue tint of hydrogen, the shapes and movements of the great coloured flames can be discerned and watched.

Now the most interesting of all the results which have followed from the application of this fertile method of observation has been the division of the coloured prominences into two definite classes. First there are the cloud-like prominences, which in form and movement closely resemble the clouds of a wind-swept sky, or sometimes of a sky comparatively calm. Secondly, there are the jet-like prominences, which by their form (their initial form at any rate) and by all their movements show that they are due to eruptive action.

The cloud-like prominences appear around all parts of the sun's edge, which is equivalent to saying that they occur at all parts of the sun's surface. In this respect they are like the solar clouds and the faculæ. They are apt to be somewhat larger and more numerous opposite the spot-zones, which amounts to saying that they occur in greater relative frequency, and attain a greater average size, over the spot-zones. In this respect they resemble the faculæ. It seems likely therefore that if (as is most probable) there is some connection between the coloured prominences and the phenomena of the sun's surface, the faculæ are the features to be specially associated with the coloured prominences of cloud-like form. These cloud flames attain sometimes an enormous size and height, reaching sometimes eighty or even a hundred thousand miles above the sun's surface. They are less brilliant than the eruptive prominences, and though their movements (or rather their apparent changes of form) are sometimes amazingly rapid when compared with the movements of terrestrial clouds, yet they show nothing like the rapidity of motion observed in the prominences of jet-like form. The cloud flames may be looked for at all times, whether the sun shows many spots or few, or none;

but they are apt to be rather more numerous when there are many spots.

The eruption prominences, on the other hand, are never seen except opposite the spot-zones, or, in other words, they never exist except over these zones of the sun's surface. Moreover, the jet prominences are only seen when there are spots on these zones; and though this has not yet been actually established by observation, there are strong reasons for believing that an eruption prominence is never to be seen except above a solar spot. Their occurrence only over the spot-zone, and at a time when there are visible spots, suffices of itself, however, to prove that they are intimately connected with the occurrence of that particular kind of disturbance which results in the breaking up of the photosphere and the formation of sun-spots.

This being so, it becomes probable, on *à priori* grounds, that by studying the jet-like prominences we may obtain information about sun-spots, and *vice versâ*, that any true theory we may be able to form respecting sun-spots will throw some light on the nature of the eruption prominences.

These jet-like protuberances are generally smaller, brighter, and better defined than their cloud-like brethren. They have usually been regarded as actual eruptions of glowing hydrogen; but this view seems as incorrect as would be the idea that the smoke and products of chemical action flung from the mouth of a cannon are the real missiles ejected. We may, indeed, by noting the behaviour of the glowing hydrogen in the eruption prominences, obtain clear and decisive evidence that it is to the smoke from a cannon they are to be compared rather than to the ejected missiles. We see lofty columns of the glowing hydrogen at first as though they had themselves been flung forth as mighty streams of gas from the sun's interior; but a few minutes later the upper parts of these columnar streams spread themselves out into cloud-like forms, much as the smoke which at first rushes straight enough from the mouth of a cannon begins presently to expand into cloud-formed masses. Such, for instance, was the behaviour of a mighty spiral column of glowing hydrogen seen by Zöllner as far back as 1870, and pictured in my treatise on the sun. Here was a column 32,000 miles in height, so that four globes like our earth, placed one upon the top of another, would not have reached to the summit of this long column. How unlikely, on the face of things, that a rare gas such as the hydrogen then seen (for, by the spectroscopic method of observation, its

density could be determined and was found to be small) could be ejected through resisting vaporous matter to so enormous a height. But even could this have happened, it is certain that after rushing *thus far* the hydrogen would continue to ascend in jet-like form, not begin to spread into cloud form just where the jet-like motion would have become possible in consequence of the greatly diminished resistance.

If any doubt could remain after the consideration of such cases, it would be removed by the phenomena presented during the celebrated eruption witnessed by Professor Young in 1871.¹ On that occasion a long low-lying cloud of glowing hydrogen was torn into shreds by a tremendous outburst which occurred below. Long filaments of hydrogen were seen travelling upwards so swiftly that their motion was actually discernible, a circumstance very unusual, and meaning a great deal at the sun's distance. Higher and higher these filaments of hydrogen seemed to rush, until at last they had attained the enormous height of 210,000 miles (at least)² from the sun's visible surface. Even at that enormous height they did not cease to ascend; they simply lost their lustre and became no longer discernible.

From a calculation based on the observed time in which this enormous distance seemed to be traversed, I determined the velocity with which the matter ejected on that occasion crossed the visible surface of the sun at certainly not less than 300, and probably not less than 500 miles per second. Now the filaments of glowing hydrogen by no means presented the appearance of bodies rushing with enormous velocity through a resisting atmosphere. On the contrary, they were long irregular streaks of luminous gas, pointed in front (with reference to the direction of their motion) as well as in the rear. I do not think they can possibly be regarded as the missiles then ejected. Their motion was probably apparent only, not real. I take it that when one of these filaments was seen apparently advancing with enormous velocity upwards, what was really happening was this: A solid or liquid mass was rushing upwards, tearing its way through whatever hydrogen lay along its track, and thus leaving behind it a trail of glowing hydrogen, growing at the upper end as the missile

¹ Eruptions of a similar character have been witnessed since, but that was the first that had ever been seen.

² They may have passed much farther away than this, for the distance measured was the apparent distance; and if their course was aslant to the direction of the line of sight, the real distance was certainly greater, and may have been much greater.

advanced, and losing length at the rear end as the imparted heat passed away, and so appearing to advance—even as the trail of a meteor seems to advance, though in reality the luminous matter forming that trail has not passed onwards; but the meteor passing onwards has caused atmospheric regions continually farther and farther forwards to become luminous.

It is tolerably obvious that on this occasion there was an ejection of matter solid or liquid (or if vaporous, then of great density) at velocities so great that the ejected matter could never return to the sun. A velocity of about 360 miles per second is the greatest the sun can control in matter at his surface. In this case the ejected matter probably crossed the sun's surface at a velocity far exceeding this, and is now travelling, with velocity constantly diminishing but never to be entirely lost, into the remote depths of interstellar space. It is difficult to see how so enormous a velocity as this could have been acquired or imparted below that mobile surface which we call the photosphere. Professor Young has suggested that the sun is a gigantic bubble, and that beneath the skin (really the enclosing strata) of this bubble the forces of outburst may be restrained until they acquire the energy necessary to expel matter at the observed rate of ejection. But everything in the behaviour of the great eruption prominences speaks of an origin much more deep-seated than the inner layers of the photospheric cloud regions. Doubtless it is at and below the real surface of the sun that the eruptions occur by which missiles are ejected through the solar cloud envelopes, to pass in some cases but a few thousand miles higher, in others hundreds of thousands of miles away through the heart of the corona, and in yet others beyond the very limits of the solar system itself.¹

Lastly, in the corona itself we find evidence of the action of eruptive or repulsive forces in the solar spot region, though indirectly rather than directly. There is, indeed, direct evidence of some such action in the greater extension of the corona opposite the spot-zones. But the indirect evidence is stronger. The light of the corona, under spectroscopic analysis, is found to be partly reflected sunlight, partly inherent light due apparently to two sources—first, incandescent solid and liquid matter in the

¹ It is noteworthy that in 1864 Mr. Sorby, of Sheffield, was led by the microscopic study of meteors to the belief, or rather to the conviction, that they had once been either in the interior of our sun, or of a body in the sunlike state; while the late Professor Graham, of London, was led to a precisely similar conclusion respecting the Lenarto iron meteor, by the quantity of hydrogen which he found occluded within its mass.

neighbourhood of the sun, and secondly glowing gas. The lines of glowing hydrogen show that this gas is present in the corona at times, if not always, though assuredly not as the component of a gaseous atmosphere extending from the sun to the distance of even the inner bright corona. But it is noteworthy that the lines of hydrogen have only been seen or have only been bright at a time when there have been many spots on the sun's face, and therefore at the season when eruption prominences appear. It seems reasonable to infer that at such times the eruptive or repulsive action of which the jet prominences give evidence leads to the ejection or repulsion of meteoric and cometic matter through the hydrogen present in the corona, and consequently to the heating of the hydrogen in such degree that its bright lines show under spectroscopic scrutiny.

It seems certainly noteworthy that so many phenomena presented by the sun-spots themselves, the coloured flames, and the corona, accord so well with a theory originally advanced only as a suggested way of interpreting certain features of the solar spots. Whether the theory is sound or not, it serves conveniently to associate a number of highly interesting facts respecting these phenomena of the sun and of sun-surrounding space.

R. A. PROCTOR.

Steeple-chasing.

THERE is something so manly, so English as we Englishmen are pleased to understand it, about the sport of steeple-chasing, that its decadence would be a matter for much regret. Chasing has just that sort of danger about it that Englishmen like to encounter, a danger which skill and courage, as a rule—except in the case of untoward accidents, which may happen to the most peaceful of men while stepping into a hansom cab—will surmount; and one may permissibly talk of Englishmen in this connection, because the sport has never been popularised abroad. It very frequently happens that a man not only owns a chaser, but rides him. On the telegraph boards at meetings where cross-country events are being decided, 'Owner' is a familiar adjunct to the number of the horse on the card; and in this respect chasing appeals to the sportsman more directly than racing on the flat.

After all, what has the owner of a racehorse to do with his property, at least in a very great many cases? Mr. Saddlington or Lord Cropper is congratulated on the victory of his chestnut colt, or the gallant struggle of his bay filly, but what has Saddlington or his lordship done to achieve these gratifying results? Very often just nothing at all, except, indeed, writing an occasional cheque, which is not an intellectual or difficult performance in a general way, supposing that a man has a balance at his banker's—when some one who has not this luxury obtains money for his cheque, ingenuity of a more or less reprehensible character may have been employed. A man's trainer advises him as to the purchase of the animal, a well-bred youngster with make and shape to recommend him, or a recognised performer, as the case may be. The trainer has the sole charge of the horse during its preparation, he points out where the chances of winning races are best, where it shall be entered and where struck out. He conveys it to the scene of action, often hires a jockey, gives him instructions how to ride, tells the owner what prospects of success there are, and often—if unfortunately the owner bets—

drops a suggestion as to how much it will be safe to risk in that ever-whirling Charybdis, the betting ring.

The chestnut wins, and Mr. Saddlington is discussed as if the whole thing had depended on his knowledge and dexterity; or the bay loses, and men condole with Cropper, or perhaps inquire among themselves how so notorious a donkey can expect to win races. But with a chaser it is different. Cropper can probably ride; if he can't he thinks he can, which is to a great extent, at least so far as the fun is concerned, the same thing. He goes down to his training quarters and has a spin over the fences. It may be that he is going to steer his own animal in the race for which it is being prepared, and if so he will very likely be in the saddle when the trial takes place, supposing always that the horse is tried; for some good judges hate trying horses if they can do without it; that is to say, so long as they see that the chasers have their action, are well in themselves, and have done enough work, they are content. But probably Cropper likes riding trials. He takes some friends down to see it, to whom he explains why he came off at the open ditch—no fault of his, of course—if any little mishap of that sort should occur, and who cheerily 'have their pony on' out of affection for old Cropper, when he comes out gaily in his colours on the day of the race. The trainer has been told that he is 'on fifty to nothing' (need it be explained for the benefit of any reader that this means he is to have 50*l.* at no risk to himself in the event of victory?); and as he sees his lordship riding at the first fence he looks grave, as if inwardly speculating on the present market value of the wager.

All owners are not like this, it need hardly be said. There are men who know as much about horses as their trainers, whose advice a trainer would seek, not out of compliment, but for its real value. Sometimes, too, the owner of the chaser is really a horseman, who can hold his own against all professional rivals; or, again, he may be a man who has never jumped a gap or a sheep hurdle in his life; but the owners described are typical, and as a rule the owner of the chaser, supposing that his years do not exceed forty or his weight eleven stone, has more direct connection with and knowledge of his property than the owner of the five-year-old who has been let into the Cambridgeshire at 6*st.* 7*lbs.*

The nature of chasing has altered since our forefathers, mounted on their favourite hunters, had spins against each other

in the course of a run, and were prone to magnify the excellence of their steeds, or, perhaps, the capacity of the steeds' riders, after dinner. At this period fences are very apt to grow remarkably in height. That jump out of the plough *was* a good-sized one at twelve o'clock in the morning. There was an awkward ditch on the take-off side, the landing was indefinite, and the binders made jumping it necessary—an attempt to run through would have resulted in a turn over, it could not be else. But it was not the enormous place it presents itself to the imagination of the man who jumped it when he recalls it to memory after having passed the claret, not for the first time. It was not so high by nearly two feet as he now supposes, and his estimate of the ditch is excessive; he forgets too that he by no means liked the look of it when he saw what was before him, and that he was unaffectedly glad when he had landed, not sitting down in his saddle quite as he would like, on the other side. He only remembers that he did get over in safety, and he does not think—when the decanters are round again, and he hears his neighbour hinting that *he* did great things in jumping out of a certain lane, a jump that a boy might have cleared on a Shetland pony—that anybody in the Hunt could have followed him. It may have been the horse, it may have been—perhaps, he thinks, it was—the rider; but he is fully satisfied that the pair are invincible, so satisfied that he is ready to back his opinion and make a match on the spot.

By some such reflections as these it was that steeple-chases were originated in former times. Matches grew up in the course of discussion about the events of the day's sport after hounds—and probably the older generation of sportsmen were more careful to ride after hounds instead of over them. Sometimes, indeed, the men could not wait till morning to decide the question, for more than one case is on record where a party of sportsmen have risen from the table and started off on a steeple-chase forthwith, putting white garments—may one say shirts?—over their coats, so that competitors might be visible, and a man who was down might not be jumped on unnecessarily in the shadow. The deciding of such races must have had a serious tendency to perplex the judge.

In these days steeples had something to do with steeple-chases. Courses were not marked out; that came later, and the regulation 'steeple-chase course' of the present day later still. Some distant point was fixed on—four, five, eight, it might have been ten miles

off (unnecessarily and cruelly severe chases of twice ten miles are recorded), and to this the riders made the best of their way. The hunters that ran these races were, as regards the question of speed, very far inferior to the chasers of to-day, which latter are almost invariably thoroughbred; most believers in the past flatter themselves that there was wonderful superiority of endurance about the old-fashioned hunter, that is to say, that he could 'stay' at racing pace better than our horses, casts-off from the flat, as they often are. The latter are not trained to stay exceptional distances; if they were, a fair proportion of them would probably do so. Nevertheless, one cannot but regret the contests of a bygone age, and admit that there was more of the real spirit of sport in them than in the fashionable Sandown chases of to-day—ininitely more.

Pluck has in no way decreased. Not long since a good man who is still to the fore, Mr. Arthur Yates, broke his collar-bone on the way to the post for a four-mile steeple-chase, but took so little notice of the matter that he rode his race and was beaten only by a short head. On another occasion, the same rider, after a bad fall, caught his horse by the tail, and, getting somehow into the saddle, won in a canter. The sound horsemanship of Mr. J. M. Richardson, the delicate handling of Mr. Arthur Coventry, were probably never approached by the good men of half a century back; yet there was something about these old chases which calls for special admiration.

So much more tax was laid on a man's resource. He had not to jump so many regulation fences, but to find his way over the country. Discretion aided him, or want of discretion stopped him, as the case might be. He had ground of all sorts to cross, and here his judgment was tested—how best to get over the plough; whether it was a good thing to ride a little out of the line, where the going was heavy, to splash down that watery furrow; how to manage the ridges, whether to chance that boggy piece, and dash boldly through it or to cast about for firmer ground. To weigh all this, and to pick good places at the jumps—the country was a stiff one, but a man did not select ugly places for the sake of crossing them—showed that knowledge of the real sport which one cannot but admire. A man mounted on his own horse, set to perform a task like this, and performing it successfully, awakens a sentiment of esteem which is not extended to Saddlington, when one of his horses, a failure on the flat, which looked like jumping, and has been half schooled over fences, gets home in front of three animals

a shade worse than himself over two miles of a modern steeple-chase course.

Chasing used to be nearly allied to hunting; now it is a sort of offshoot of racing. We have seen how chases were got up in the hunting field, and how the consequence was a struggle over so many miles of country—fair hunting country, as a matter of course—and generally ‘owners up.’ But this sort of thing did not last. A well-bred hunter doubtless held his own in most cases against a coarser-bred animal; but the thoroughbred was superior to all. An owner, we will say, had a horse which disappointed him continually under Newmarket rules.

‘What’s to be done with him?’ the owner says when, after having been fancied and backed, he has run third, an outsider winning, with the first favourite second.

‘Well, sir, he’s got a turn of speed, and he looks like jumping. He might win a hurdle race?’ his trainer suggests.

‘See what you can do with him, then,’ is the owner’s reply, and the disappointing one is put into schooling for hurdles, or, if he jumps well but is not very speedy, for the more advanced game.

This was what frequently happened just after it had been discovered that an extended interest was being taken in chasing, that people would flock to a place where a steeple-chase was announced, and that, being unable to see what took place when a contest was held over so many miles of straightforward hunting country, these people would pay for places on a stand, near which also a betting ring had been set up. The area of view was circumscribed, and so the course became short. To fit these exigencies some of the fences had to be made, and they were made easy. The cast-off from the flat was taught to jump them, and when it came to galloping the true hunter had no chance against him. Running such horses was evidently a good speculation. More of them joined in the game, the pioneers having been successful; steeple-chase courses of the artificial pattern were made up; the clerks of these sought entries; steeples had by this time nothing to do with steeple-chasing; courses were constructed to favour the racehorses at the expense of the hunters, because the former were ousting the latter from the field.

Thus steeple-chasing, that is, steeple-chasing proper, declined. Courses sprang up, or, it should rather be said, were made up, in all directions, and the clerks of these courses lived on their success, and laid themselves out to secure as many horses as possible; it is natural, however regrettable, that they should have

made their courses more and more easy, half-schooled chasers being more plentiful than the finished article; for it takes a long time to teach a steeple-chaser his business. Jumping fences in the hunting-field is one thing, jumping them at racing pace is quite another. Most men who have had any experience of country life know how the hunter jumps. As he sees the fence before him, he usually shortens his stride, goes at it in a more collected form, pauses more or less as he takes off, and, having made his effort, slightly pauses again on landing. These pauses would just lose a man the race over a country, and the great thing is to teach chasers to collect themselves when at full speed, to get away from their fences, to go at them with the slightest possible diminution of pace, and to be off on the other side without dwelling. To do this so as to win races is a matter which requires much time and much practice. What are called natural jumpers are all well enough, but nature does not take steeple-chasing into consideration when she helps her equine children on the way they should go.

It is an interesting sight to see the young horse being taught the business in which it is hoped that he will shine. He has good shoulders and good quarters, the two essentials for a chaser, and in fact, to employ the technical phrase, 'looks like jumping.' Kindness, patience, and good 'hands' are the requisites in the teacher—a good seat is understood, for most boys in training stables have this. Few young horses hit upon just what is wanted at first. To begin with, they generally make too much fuss about it, clearing each little fence in their nursery ground as though it were the water jump in a real steeple-chase, just as after a career over the dangerously easy fences of the average modern course, they get careless; for this paradox may be taken as a fact: the more easy a course is, the more dangerous it is likely to prove. If steeple-chase courses were what they should be, only steeple-chase horses would run over them—that is to say, horses that had been duly schooled and taught their business; and these fences would require so much jumping, that the rider would be forced to pull his horse together to steady him, and make him go at the obstacle in collected form, instead of galloping at and 'chancing it.'

Here, however, is our young one coming—we had almost lost sight of him. He is to have his first gallop at racing pace over his training ground, having been through his course of schooling

and acquitted himself well. We will take our place by this fence and watch.

The big brown is a well-known chaser who wants a gallop; the grey mare is a hunter—a genuine hunter by profession—who is to be run at a local meeting, and is let into the spin to see what pace she has; and the bright chestnut, on which the trainer himself has mounted—after seeing him carefully fitted with ‘boots’ lest he should cut or overreach—is the novice. The spacious downs are dotted with made-up fences, forming a circle some mile and a half round. Away to the right are the grand stand, the disused telegraph board, the weighing room, and other buildings belonging to the course where the annual meeting is held; their present deserted aspect makes a striking contrast to the busy scene with which they are usually associated. A string of some thirty sheeted horses are walking round and round; and up the slope surmounted by the plantation, grown to protect horses from the weather, whichever way the wind may be, half a dozen others are moving at a brisk canter. It is that familiar scene, the race-horse at home.

But the three have started off, and near the first fence. They come to it in a line, but the brown is over first, and, moreover, is away first; more is not perceptible, except that he evidently has the lead when they have landed, a lead soon wrested from him by the impetuous young one, whose rider does not violently haul at his head, but lets him go on for a little way almost as he pleases, and then quietly draws him back again to the others. They near the fence where we stand, and now we shall see what they can do. The brown has taken hold of his bit, not to run away, but to lean on his rider's hand; the grey on the left is evidently galloping her hardest, though her companion is going easily within himself; the young one speeds along, his hind legs well under him, and as they near the fence, he pricks up his ears to take in, as it were, what he has to do. The thud of their hoofs on the soft turf is unchecked. Here they are! The brown, with no perceptible effort in rising, glides over the fence. It is firmly made up, as he knows, and he jumps it with nothing to spare, but safely enough. How he picks up his legs it is not easy to say, for the twigs seem to brush his girths as he crosses over. The pace is altogether too fast for the hunter. She is flurried and gets right under the guard rail in front of the fence, and this she knocks with all four feet, so that at this jump, when by an effort she is safely over, she pauses more than at the former. The youngster is across

before her. He gives his head one shake, rushes at it, is well over, and off again on the other side so quickly that five or six strides beyond he is level with the brown, which rose a length in front of him. The old one is, perhaps, a trifle slow with age, though he still wins chases, and what he lacks in speed is to a great extent compensated for by the cleverness with which he fences. As for the hunter, it is already evident that only in the most moderate company can she hope to hold her own.

The amateur trainer is very apt to make blunders about his horse's ability, because he does not know what will happen to him when it comes to racing, as in the case of the grey mare just introduced. At home she has been reckoned something out of the common. As it seems to her owner, who has nothing by the side of which to test her merits, she gallops very fast indeed. She never dreams of refusing or turning her head when sent at a jump, and his early ambition to win a race with her at a local hunt meeting has grown till he has come to regard her as well able to hold her own in a chase at some popular course. For this reason he has induced the trainer of our young one to let him have a turn against something with a reputation; but as he watches, with all his partiality for the old mare he cannot but perceive that the home efforts were sadly delusive, and that when it comes to the real thing she is altogether out of her element.

Let us canter across and take up a station at the spot where they are to finish. They near the last fence, and the young one is a couple of lengths ahead. Except that he is a little too eager, he comes over in grand style, taking off, indeed, six or eight feet too soon, and jumping big, but none the less easily and cleverly. The brown slips over in his almost mechanical style, and then, for this is a race, his rider tries to overhaul the chestnut; but though the old horse answers to the call as best he can when the rider's whip is raised, the leader, hardly out of a canter, holds his own, his trainer turning his head to see what the followers are doing. As for the hunter, she has lumbered up to the last fence, stopped almost dead from sheer distress, gamely thrown herself over, landing anyhow, and is coming on at the best pace she can raise, which is a very bad one, far in the rear. The young one promises well. The grey is a hunter and not a racehorse, which to all intents and purposes the chaser of to-day must be.

The old kind of sport has not quite died out, but it would be pleasant to see it more common. Local hunt meetings over natural countries chosen in some part of the hunt, with occasion-

ally a point-to-point race—which is the veritable steeple-chase—are still held, and a good deal of fun surrounds them. Not that the word fun describes the affair from Fluffy's point of view, when the last act of the comedy is reached. Fluffy is one of the men who are most fond of hunting in the summer when there is none. Few men possess more pairs of top boots, and he has his own opinion as to how he will look in a racing jacket. Of course there is a dinner to arrange preliminaries. 'Quid non ebrietas designat?' Horace asks—the noun is used in its mildest and most innocent significance—and at least it gives Fluffy rosy hopes of victory. What a simple thing riding over a steeple-chase course is!—to the looker-on, that is to say, and at the moment Fluffy is imaginatively standing aside to note the victory of that famous jacket, or, to be accurate, the jacket that is to become famous. Enter a horse? Of course he will. He would not miss the chance on any account. Chasing is simply the best sport he knows, until, time having passed, the eventful day has arrived, he is mounted and has almost forgotten the brilliance of the jacket in a feeling of amazement at the marvellous way in which the fences have grown. He has known the country for years, but never knew the jumps to be so big, and not only so big but so ugly; for he forgets that as a rule he has tried the gates or taken his turn at a gap. These are not now available. Instead of picturing victory he actually begins to wonder whether he will get home safely. The amazing coolness of experienced riders who are accustomed to riding chases, and are not in the least disturbed at the magnitude of the task before them—as he supposes, for in fact it is a very ordinary course—in no way comforts him. He has had misgivings more than once of late, and the consequence of all this is that he nervously wrestles down his horse after scrambling clumsily across the first two obstacles.

One of the chief causes of the temporary decadence of chasing arises from the patronage given to hurdle racing. It is a simpler thing to jump hurdles than to jump a country; there is less wear and tear for horses, and a great deal more money to be won. Several of the prizes are very handsome ones. At the present time there are more good horses running in hurdle races than was ever the case before, and fields for chases are as a rule very small, for the hurdle racer is an immature chaser, and if in his immaturity he pays best, why go on with him? Chasing is the nobler game, but much schooling over a country destroys a horse's speed, and speed is wanted for hurdle races, in which the perfect competitor

gallops, taking his hurdles in his stride, and as it were disregarding the flights altogether.

It has been seen how steeple-chase courses were cut down to suit horses that were not steeple-chasers. In the new Grand National Hunt Committee, the governing body of the sport, a disposition exists to restore courses till they more nearly approach what they should be, a fair hunting country. Meantime, owners who really care for the sport and who do not recognise its genuine characteristics over existing courses, where everything is sacrificed to speed, and an attempt is made to make speed dangerous by insisting on a 'trappy' jump, an open ditch cut away abruptly before a fence, which would be much safer if it were made much bigger with a guard rail in front of it, must console themselves with attempts to win the Liverpool Grand National, run over a course that is big enough to suit anybody, or that essentially sporting affair, the Grand National Hunt Steeple-Chase, the venue of which changes every year, but in which the condition is that horses must never have run in a chase before; so that—for considerable honour and glory attach to success—men are tempted to keep and school their horses entirely for the hope of winning this race.

Of late, for various reasons, steeple-chasing has somewhat languished, but the spectacle is too picturesque and popular, the sport too characteristically English, to make reasonable the fear that it can ever die out.

ALFRED E. T. WATSON.

A Mad Parson.

CHAPTER I.

MR. CLAUDIAN FAIRHOLME woke in the darkness of the night. It was the last night of spring or the first night of summer; and through the open window the silent air came, and with it all the warm life of the garden. Claudian was glad to be awake; the moment was delicious; he knew that he had only to let droop his drowsy lids and he would sleep again, and sleep sweetly, in that delicately odorous air. Presently in the outer silence some liquid notes were uttered; the dark walled garden, full of the night and of the bloom of lilacs and the first green of ancient trees, had found a voice; a nightingale was singing. Mr. Fairholme turned his head upon the pillow just so far that both ears might be open to the bird's music. Yesterday there had been rain—a soft continuous rain, which had washed away the last harshness of winter—and Claudian in the rain had felt sad. Yesterday he had been expecting visitors, and it was only too likely that they would disturb his admirable life. But after the rain had come this exquisite night; and his visitors were sleeping under his old high-pitched roof; and his life seemed admirable still. Murmuring a Greek line about the nightingale, Claudian Fairholme was aware of his eyelids falling softly. Πανδαρέου κούρη, his lips murmured,

χλωρῆς ἀηδὸν
Καλὸν αἰδεῖσθαι ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένοιο,
Δενδρέων ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη πνικνοῦσιν.

He smiled as he tasted the freshness of the Greek words, and smiling fell asleep. The nightingale went on singing.

The morning was worthy to follow the night; a light wind, almost too gentle to be wind, came from the west to meet the dawn, and the blue of the sky was soft. In the room next to Claudian's, his guest and friend, a man of like years, turned once or twice uneasily in the morning light, and then woke with a start. He sat up in bed and stared at the window with eyes

strange and stern. His head was big and rather bald ; his beard was long, untrimmed, and thin, and through it one might see the sensitive lips set close together. Out in the garden, where it was a rare day for growing, there was a great babble of birds ; but the good gentleman did not hear them. His ears were attentive only to the cawing of the rooks, who were seriously busy in the big elm before the window. From his bed he could behold their solemn trifling, their ponderous playfulness. Now one funereal bird and now another alighted heavily upon a slender twig, which was by much too small for him. Then would he topple forward and topple backward, clumsily balancing himself until he fell off into air ; then would he fly in a short circle, and come back with a caw to try a higher and a slenderer twig. 'They are like parsons,' cried the newly-awakened gentleman with a great voice ; 'ha ! ha !' As he spoke aloud, the wide, sensitive mouth seemed to writhe behind the thin veil of the moustache and wavy beard, and a sharp line appeared in one lean cheek between the long nose and the corner of the lip. His laugh seemed to mock the cawing of the rooks, which moved his merriment, but it had less dignity. He stopped his laughter short and jumped from his bed. He shouted in his bath ; he rubbed himself with a rough towel, as if it were a gymnastic feat. 'Ha ! ha !' he cried ; 'I am warm.' He rushed about the room and got himself into his clothes.

As soon as he was dressed he ran down the old oak staircase, and wellnigh fell headlong into the cool tiled hall, where the old Persian rugs are spread. Then he tugged at the handles of the front door till by chance it opened, and he sped into the sweet air of the new day, and drew deep breaths with rapture. With long nervous fingers he tugged his thin and wavy beard ; he seemed to be opening his mouth by this rather elaborate process. Then he went quickly round and about the nicely-ordered shrubberies of the garden ; and since the gate was locked he impetuously climbed the wall and all but dropped upon a party of small children who were playing in the lane. The children fled in amazement. To ease their fears he stood and bellowed after them, like Achilles in the trenches, but they fled the faster. So down the lane he went the other way, for he would not frighten these unreasonable infants more ; and stopping not for the scent and loveliness of hawthorn all in bloom, he came out upon the smooth green where the old Cathedral stands. There was the old Cathedral, cool and grey in the fair cool light, solid and stately,

spacious and high, and enduring for generations; and there the strange visitor stood still at last, and glared. Then he shook a lean brown fist at the great Cathedral, and went back to breakfast. Though this gentleman had been a parson, the Cathedral seemed none the worse.

Claudian Fairholme came down to breakfast before the return of his old friend, but the room was not empty. There, making tea, was his old friend's daughter, very cool and pleasant to look upon, with her neat, ruffled brown head bent above the teapot. The window was open behind her, and on the smooth lawn were shadows of trees, and here and there a thrush took three hops and seemed to listen. Claudian stood still in the doorway with a little gasp of pleasure. It was the sort of thing he liked. A girl at a breakfast table on a very fine morning was appropriate; he had a keen sense of the fitness of things. This child of his old friend was almost a stranger to him. As she looked up he noticed for the first time that she had very pretty eyebrows. When she smiled, she showed her small regular teeth; but her lip came down closely over them when she had done with her smiling; this gave her rather a determined look for one so young. She greeted Claudian Fairholme with a business-like nod; and then, as if she remembered that he was her host, she came towards him with an inquiring look about the pretty eyebrows. 'I declare I forgot,' she said, 'that I wasn't making tea at home. I don't know what I was thinking about, for we haven't such a lovely room as this, and our teapot is such a battered old thing.'

Claudian felt a little shy in the presence of this self-possessed young lady. It struck him that he had almost forgotten how to talk to ladies; and that this was perhaps the one unfortunate effect of that life of scholarly leisure which he had chosen for himself a few years ago. It seemed absurd that he should feel shy where a young girl showed no sign of shyness. She was not shy. She nodded to a chair as if she would ask him to be seated; and when he obeyed her nod, she gave him a cup of tea, which seemed even better than he gave himself on other mornings; and yet Mr. Claudian Fairholme was very particular about his tea. She looked at him with interest, and asked him questions about the place and people; and since he was slow in answering, she began to tell him, instead, of the place where she had lived, and of the people whom she knew. It was the gossip of a quiet country neighbourhood, of which he had known something in days gone by. She thought that she ought to entertain

her host as well as she could. 'The Blackhams had just settled to give something,' she said, 'when we left—theatricals or a ball—I don't know which. The Lelands have not given anything at all this year; old Mr. Leland says he really can't afford it. Freddy and Tommy and Dicky have all muffed for the army. It's really dreadful!' She was very emphatic.

'Ah, I remember the Lelands,' said Claudian courteously; 'a very slipshod family.'

'Yes, it's quite dreadful. I can't think how they are allowed to go on so. Mrs. Leland is very much to blame.' She spoke judicially, and her upper lip expressed grave disapproval. Claudian thought that she was very funny with her verdicts, which she delivered without a trace of animosity; she spoke as if it were her duty to express an adverse opinion. She looked comically young as a moralist; but her little air of decision and her coolness were undeniably pretty. 'I like Freddy Leland,' she continued, 'and Dicky is a nice boy. I don't like Tommy at all. I think it's a great pity that Carry is allowed to go on as she does.' She looked severe; Claudian waited for further light on Carry Leland, but the moralist had set her lips, and would say no more about Carry. 'Of course you heard all about the wedding,' she said.

'I don't know,' said Mr. Fairholme; 'what wedding?'

'Delia Wentworth's,' she said with a look which was almost a rebuke. 'You remember Delia Wentworth, of course.'

'Is that Theodore Wentworth's daughter?'

'Of course,' she said, with pity for his uncertain mind. 'It was such a pretty wedding, but you never saw such a composed bride. She wouldn't go away because she hadn't had enough breakfast!' Claudian, who was uncertain whether he was meant to express admiration or disapproval, smiled rather feebly. 'Richard kept hurrying her, and she wouldn't go; and they as nearly as possible missed the train. Richard was so nice; he gave me my dog; I should have liked to bring him with me, but papa said he'd disturb you; he wouldn't have disturbed you a bit he's the cleverest pup in the world.'

'Richard?' asked Claudian vaguely.

'Richard!' she cried with a quick, musical laugh at his vagueness, 'no; my dog, which Richard gave me. Richard was the bridegroom. Isn't it wonderful that a bride can be so composed as Delia was? I know I shall be dreadfully frightened.' Claudian looked at her with surprise, but she was quite cool and grave.

'Are you going to be married?' he asked.

She laughed again at his dulness. 'I mean, whenever I am married,' she said. He smiled and nodded. 'Can't I do anything while I am here?' she asked presently. 'Do they have penny readings? There is a town, isn't there?'

'A very small town, and very sleepy. It sleeps under the shadow of the Cathedral. I don't think they have any readings at any price.'

'What a pity!' she said. 'I could have played something. Do you play?'

'I play a little,' said Claudian softly. 'I am very fond of music. Do you sing?'

'I haven't sung since my cold in the winter; but we might have played duets. I get through duets very well.'

This had an ominous sound in the ear of Claudian. 'You get through duets?' he said softly.

'Oh yes,' she said; 'if I get out in a duet, I just stop and try to get in later.'

'Oh!' he said softly.

Suddenly, as Claudian was looking idly at his fair young guest, he saw a more intent look come into her face. She had heard the front door open before he had heard it, and she knew in an instant that her father had come back. The front door was banged, there was a mighty rattling in the umbrella-stand, a quick step in the hall, and the enthusiast entered. He looked hot and tired, and the veins on his temples were even more sharply marked than usual. He wrung his host's hand, dropped into a chair, passed a hand over his shiny skull, and then dragged his nervous fingers down through his long beard. His daughter brought him a cup of tea, and Claudian, watching her, felt sure that for all her little chat she had not forgotten to keep the tea good for her energetic parent. Claudian fancied that she regarded her father with a mixture of admiration and responsibility; he thought that she seemed even more attractive for her deeper gravity; he wondered if his old friend knew what a pretty child his daughter was.

CHAPTER II.

It was afternoon in Claudian's garden. The light breeze of the morning had sighed itself away, and the shrubberies were almost silent; it was a drowsy hour. Even the enthusiast was

lowered to a softer mood, though he was very much in earnest. His eyes were fixed eagerly on the friend of his youth, whom he had always admired above all other men. The friend of his youth was pensive, but interested. He felt a revival in him of that interest with which the enthusiast's schemes had inspired him in their old Oxford days. The enthusiasm of other people was always attractive to Claudian. It is true that his friend's schemes had assumed a wholly different shape; but the enthusiasm was still there. At Oxford Ferdinand had been a high-churchman, and had besought his friend daily and eagerly to be ordained with him, that together they might convert the world. Now Ferdinand would shake his fist at Cathedrals, and as he sat with his friend in the garden, he exhorted him to descend into the arena and fight for the sacred cause of Democracy. Democracy, a social democracy shot through and through with poetry, was the present food on which the enthusiast nourished his enthusiasm. He was bent fiercely on loving everybody; and woe betide the luckless wight who refused to be loved. He thought, as he had thought in their old undergraduate days, that nothing was wanted for the triumph of his new faith but the aid of the gallant and gifted Claudian, of whom he always expected so much.

'Throw in your lot with us,' he cried. 'I have given up the stolid country life for ever. Do the same; come to London with me.'

'I can't bear London,' said Claudian, looking at the nice grass beneath his feet. 'What do you expect to find in London?'

'Men and women,' said Ferdinand.

Claudian smiled faintly. 'You know that I go a long way with you,' he said.

'Not far enough! Not as far as London.'

'I am a natural democrat,' continued Mr. Fairholme, with the smile which generally accompanied his introspection; 'I am blind to differences of rank. The finest gentleman of my acquaintance is a gipsy who passes my garden wall every year on his way from the New Forest. He comes a little out of his way to see me; he brings a forest freshness with him, a tonic, a flavour of Arden. I once knew a duke, and he was a snob.'

'I should like to know the gipsy,' said Ferdinand with fervour; 'we might travel with him in the summer.'

'You and your daughter?'

'You and I. I want to bring you down, down to the smell of the wholesome earth, to the flavour of a struggling humanity.'

Oh, Claudian, it's not enough to sit staring at your foot in a garden. It is time to move.'

'Move? Where?'

'Everywhere! Come and hunt your fellow men. Track them with me to their dens and their drinking shops, their music halls and their beds in dry arches. Spring upon them and swear brotherhood.'

'Do you think they'd like it?'

'They would like it from you. You are the man we want; I have known it always. With your charm of manner you can win anybody. The drunkard, the thief, the poor scum of the gutters, would be your brothers and sisters!'

Claudian looked doubtful. The enthusiast went on with growing warmth: 'And then, with your genius—you were always our genius, you know—you could strike the keynote and make the world ring. I don't know how; I won't ask how. Only throw open your close nature, and take it all in. Take the whole world in, men and women, suffering and sinning. And when you have absorbed it all, rise up some morning and shout the battle-cry. Something great must come of it—a revolution—a book—something to change the world. It is your task, for you have the highest genius.'

Claudian was pleased; he was glad that the admiration of his old friend had not cooled.

'Politics have belonged to a class,' said the enthusiast after a pause; 'they must belong to humanity. They have been the game of the old; they must be the work of the young. It is for the vigorous young man to go down and preach brotherhood in the beer shops and blind alleys; it is for us to awaken the people, and with the people's strength to wrest the power from the old fossils at Westminster.'

Claudian's attention had wandered a little; but he noted a phrase which pleased him. 'Those old fossils at Westminster,' he repeated softly smiling. It was spring, and there stirred in Claudian Fairholme a new life and youth. He smiled at the old fossils. He felt himself a strong man and a young man. His eyes wandered away again to where, at the far end of the garden, a slight figure came from the shadows. 'Ut flos in septis,' he murmured,

Secretus nascitur hortis,

Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro,

Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber—

'You must come to London with me,' said Ferdinand; 'I can do something, and you can do far more. You will be David, and I Saul; but even I can do something.'

'Multiillum pueri, multæ optavere puellæ,' murmured Claudian, whose eyes still rested on the far end of the long garden.

'Yes,' continued the enthusiast, 'I can do something; I have proved it. Even at Nessborough I made a disciple; you'll see him to-night.'

'What?' asked Claudian, whose attention was attracted abruptly.

'Didn't I tell you about Arthur Leeson? It has been very interesting. You would have thought him a mere butterfly; he acted and danced and had a ridiculous little tenor voice. But now he has felt the faith, and is changed. For the last two months at Nessborough he came to me almost daily. He asked to be allowed to come here; I couldn't refuse my disciple.'

'But I fear my little house is full,' said Claudian, who could not bear to be inhospitable.

'He will sleep anywhere,' said the enthusiast with conviction; 'anywhere—under a haystack or the eternal stars—anywhere. He has felt the divine fury too; he—ah! Look! by Cæsar, the coincidence is amazing! He is here!' The enthusiast looked at his friend with triumph, as if Arthur Leeson had been brought from heaven by a democratic eagle. Claudian lifted his eyes and saw the young man coming over the smooth grass. He looked with interest, for he was an amateur of youth. He had liked always to watch a young man halting on the border of the world of men, his foot delaying and his heart yet tender with the dreams of boyhood: he had pleased himself with wondering whither this one or that would go in this 'bright pathetic world.'

As he looked at this young man, whose step was light on the grass, he said to himself that his looks at least were in his favour. He had a manner gay and confident, a little silky moustache, and an attractive smile. He pressed Ferdinand's lean hand in his; and then he turned to Claudian with a manner eloquent of apology. 'Don't get up, I beg,' he said; 'please don't disturb yourself.' He had more manner than most young Englishmen—but this is not a strong statement. With his close-cropped dark head, and the thin black line on his upper lip, he was not unlike a foreigner, and he was apt to move his hands a little as he spoke. 'One must respect one's seniors,' he continued, smiling—'grave and reverend seniors.' He looked from one to

the other like a man who expects to be fascinating. Claudian expressed pleasure at his coming, and Arthur Leeson held up his hand in deprecation. 'I must pay my respects to your daughter,' he said lightly to Ferdinand. Claudian thought that the new-comer was too like a light comedian. He looked after him as he walked away towards the garden's bound. He did not like the back view. He said to himself that the back of this young man's head was poor and the ears coarse. Even the enthusiast showed no excessive elation at the coming of his one disciple. When his eyes met Claudian's both men looked away with a guilty feeling; for each was conscious that he had looked to see if the other showed any marks of age. The playful phrase 'grave and reverend seniors' was in the thoughts of both; and to Claudian at least there suddenly recurred that other speech of the enthusiast about 'old fossils.'

CHAPTER III.

'WHY, Onions,' he said, slapping his manly thigh, 'ow ever are yer? I never should have known yer! What have yer done to yer whiskers?'

The young man thus playfully addressed as 'Onions' made no reply to the question of the whiskers. He was of a cautious character, and he suspected that some irony lurked under this interest in a delicate and pampered growth. He looked sideways at his friend Henry under the curly brim of his hat, and replied curtly to the question of his health.

'I'm toppin', thank ye,' he said.

Then the two young friends looked at each other in silence, but with a knowing air, as if each were playfully considering where he should hit the other; and then Henry, who was of the more festive nature, nodded sideways to a plate-glass window adorned with a picture of a cat and a barrel, and another of a popular comedian, and 'Shall we adjourn?' asked he. The cautious Onions was nothing loth.

The two friends turned out of the crowded thoroughfare, where the lamps showed dull in the air of a rather foggy evening; and as the door swung behind them they were in the glare of the gas. A long, narrow slit of a room ran backward from the street, and seemed to be more than half filled by the counter, with its row of tall white china handles all shining in the yellow light. Behind

these brilliant handles stood Polly, and stood idle too, for all the long, narrow slit before the counter was empty. All the men in the place had passed on through the open door into the close little room beyond. Henry greeted Polly with a jaunty familiarity which did not drive away the slight cloud from her brow. She drew a glass for him and another for Onions, who had left the ordering, as he meant to leave the treating, to his friend. Henry was raising his glass with a friendly wink, when he stopped short. From the inner room a fine voice burst suddenly into eloquence.

'Gormed if there ain't that old parson again!' cried Henry with enthusiasm.

'Yes; and a sin and a shame it is too,' said Polly, 'to make game of the poor gentleman.'

There was a babble of voices when the poor gentleman burst into deep-toned eloquence, but it stopped in a moment with a few isolated cries of 'Ear 'im!' 'Old your bloomin' noise!' and with some cheerful encouragement addressed to him as 'Johnny' or 'Guv'nor,' for they all knew by experience that to call him 'Parson' was to dry up the current of his strange eloquence. It was the enthusiastic Ferdinand who was speaking, and the enthusiast was in his most enthusiastic mood. He had passed beyond the bounds even of zealous exhortation. He was magniloquent, almost poetical; his chant verged on the dithyrambic.

'Even the duke is a man,' he was saying, 'and the poacher. We must not despise the duke nor the poacher. And the duchess is a woman, and so, for all their high heels and their laces, are the beautiful ladies in their drawing-rooms. At night I stand in the crowd on the pavement; I feel myself pushed and jostled by the rude crowd; and I am happy. A striped awning is stretched from the doorway, and the beautiful ladies walk in, gracious, lovely, with diamonds and laces; and they too are my sisters. A stately man-servant stands by the door with his hair powdered, calm, polite; and he is my brother. In the scullery is a maid-servant with a dirty apron washing dishes. The musicians begin to play in the white saloon; the countesses are dancing. They and the scullery-girl are sisters; they too are of the joy of the whole earth.' Henry nudged Onions; he had never heard the old gentleman in such force. The room was full of young men of the same stamp. As Ferdinand paused they rattled their glasses. 'Let the countesses work in the kitchen, and let the kitchen-maid dance to the fiddles,' continued the enthusiast, 'turn and turn about. There is nothing beautiful but work. It is the

dignity of honest labour which I proclaim. I see the labourer in the field ! he straightens his back and lifts his eyes to the setting sun ; the hour of rest comes ; he wipes his brow with the back of his hand, and pushes up the short wet hair. His sister washes plates in the kitchen ; she too is dignified and beautiful.' Henry winked at the cautious and irresponsive Onions, and then distributed winks about the room as the enthusiast became eloquent again. 'Nothing is vile,' he cried ; 'my body is not vile. I am delighted with my body. That, at least, is divine. I strip myself naked on the sea sand ; I breathe deep of the salt of the sea ; I shout to the strong wind, my brother, and to the seagull, my sister. The salt wind kisses me ; I fling open my strong arms ; I embrace the joy of the world ; I feel that all men are my brothers. I will go into the slums and find them ; I will push myself into palaces and exclusive clubs and find them. Everywhere will I seek my brothers. Beauty is not for the few, but for the many. I promise to you all beauty, and truth, and love.' Visions of Margate floated before the eyes of the young men ; they murmured applause.

The enthusiast was intoxicated by the vigour and rhythm of his own language. He had forgotten where he was and to whom he spoke ; he seemed to be addressing the universe ; he abandoned himself to a divine influence ; he was but vaguely conscious of the rappings and murmurs of applause. All around him, filling the tawdry room, were young men lolling at ease, and the smoke of cheap cigars and the fumes of brandy and water. The young men took their pleasure rather gravely, wearing for the most part a merely knowing air and a look of contempt for the rhapsodist ; but ever and anon, when something in his speech admitted of a double meaning, one or other would utter a hoarse croak, and the slow wink went round.

The enthusiast, now fairly launched on the full tide of extraordinary eloquence, might have chanted his democratic strain for an hour more ; but he was interrupted by the arrival of his daughter. The young girl, who was dressed in her darkest clothes, came quickly in from the crowded street, and, after one inquiring glance, which Polly, from behind the counter, answered with a sympathetic nod, walked straight into the room where her father was instructing the generation. She had been there before and she was not afraid. Moreover, she was not unattended ; she was followed by Arthur Leeson. The young man's dress clothes were covered by an overcoat, of which the collar was turned up ; his face

was anxious and annoyed; one could see that he had not half finished his expostulations. The girl never flinched before the atmosphere of strong drink and cheap smoke; she did not seem to notice the critical looks of the youth. She went straight to her father, and touched his arm with authority. The enthusiast stopped short in his speech, and stared at the girl. Then in a moment, as if he remembered who she was, and forgot where they both were, he tapped her cheek pleasantly. 'Is it time already?' 'Yes,' she answered. 'Well,' he said, looking round him with a large friendliness; 'I dare say I shall find my friends here to-morrow.'

A strange silence had fallen on his audience. They had not changed their easy lounging attitudes, but yet there was a certain constraint; for all their knowledge of the world, the presence of this soberly-clad young lady made them shy. Some muttered in answer to the enthusiast, and others laughed rather awkwardly. Arthur Leeson glared and bit his lip; he was disgusted; he had danced attendance in the place on previous nights, but it became more and more distasteful to him. As he parted from the girl on the doorstep of her temporary home, he asked with impressiveness, 'When can I see you to-morrow morning?' She looked at him for a moment, thinking; then she named an hour, and followed her father, who was eagerly but vainly seeking the match-box in the umbrella-stand.

CHAPTER IV.

THE girl was moving about the room and putting things in their places when Arthur Leeson came. She had made the shabby London lodgings almost pretty by her little arts. She looked grave as she heard the young man's light step on the stair. As she opened the door for him, she held her finger on her lips: her father was sleeping heavily in the next room after a night made restless by the excitement of his evening bursts of oratory. Arthur, who had walked nimbly from his home rehearsing persuasive speeches by the way, was put out by this necessity of speaking in a low tone, on which he had not counted. But after a moment he recovered himself, and he even felt that he could be doubly tender and persuasive as he almost whispered in the girl's ear. He had decided, as he came, that he would begin by speaking of her looks. 'You look tired,' he said, as she drew her hand from his.

'Thanks; I'm perfectly well. You want to speak to me about something?'

As she asked the question rather curtly, he put up his two white hands with tender deprecation. 'I wish I had the right to speak to you without reserve,' he said.

'You may say just what you like, Arthur. I am sure you won't mind my setting the room to rights while you talk.'

She began to move about again, and he followed her gently with a great deal of tender interest in his expressive eyes. Presently he sighed; and then, with the air of one who puts aside all lighter thoughts, and faces the difficult problem like a man, he began to speak. His speech was in the happy mean between ease and solemnity.

'I do wish,' he said, 'that you would give up following your dear father to these places. Ah! don't speak yet,' he added more quickly, for she had turned upon him with a set face. 'Don't speak yet,' he begged; 'you must think how impossible it is for you to continue running about in these dreadful places, among these dreadful people. You don't mind my speaking about this? I felt that I must say it.' He was like a persuasive doctor with a nervous patient, or soft young schoolmaster with a self-willed pupil; he felt himself full of sweet reasonableness.

'You may say just what you like,' she said; 'it won't alter me in the least. As long as my father chooses to go to these places, I shall go to fetch him. There is no one else to bring him home. I can't think how you should suppose for a moment that I should not go to find my father.'

'A young lady—alone! You know that such a thing has never been heard of.'

'Then it will be heard of now,' she said, with a laugh which was unnaturally high. 'I suppose you've come to tell me that you won't come with me any more. Of course you know best about that; you are perfectly at liberty as far as I am concerned.'

'My dear—my dear, I do wish—I do wish you would listen to a little reason about it.' He smiled tenderly as he offered this suggestion.

'I don't wish to listen to reason. Really, it's not the least use talking to me about this. I should be very much to blame if I did not do as I do. I know perfectly well what is my plain duty; there's no more to be said.' She looked him straight in the face, and after a moment's silence she added, 'I must understand, then, that you won't come with me any more.'

'It is terribly perplexing and painful,' he said; 'you must see that it has an extraordinary look. I might get the worst reputation at the office.'

'I don't pretend to judge for you. You would be very much to blame if you came with me when you didn't think it right.'

He stood silent for a minute with a look of regret and perplexity, and then he spoke again with becoming hesitation. 'If I only might hope,' he said—'if you would allow me only a little hope that you might some day reward me—make me the happiest of men?' He seemed to expand into a beaming and radiant lover as he uttered the familiar phrase; he seemed to be speaking across the footlights.

She looked at him with grave surprise for man's weakness. 'You promised me not to talk of that again until I gave you leave. I can't think how you can speak of it to me now; you know perfectly well that I will not think of anything but of my father, till he gives up this—this——'

'Ah, I see that you are determined to misjudge me,' he said sadly.

'I don't wish to judge you at all; I think that everybody must judge for himself. I only want to know just where I am. If I can't count on you any more, I must take the housemaid with me when I have to go out in the evening, or go alone.'

'You can't go alone,' he said quickly; 'it's out of the question. Only think what might be said.'

She allowed herself to smile a little with a slight disdain. 'You will be late at the office,' she said.

He had an admirable temper. He still looked at her with mute expostulation. 'It is terrible for me too,' he said; but she only smiled again. There was sorrow in his tone, though not more than is consonant with genteel comedy; he was no longer sprightly; his neat figure drooped, expressive of regret. 'It is terrible,' he said again; 'it has been noticed at the office.'

'Then I shan't expect you this evening.'

'I don't know what to say.'

'It is quite enough if you think you ought not to come. I can't think why you should hesitate. Of course you must do what you think right.'

'I am so dreadfully sorry,' he murmured. 'I do hope you will think better of it, and give up this—this running about in these dreadful places. Will you promise to send for me, if I—— I am so dreadfully sorry.' He slid out of the room; he almost fell on the narrow dark staircase; he was dreadfully upset.

'I can't think,' she cried, 'how men can be so—so——' She could not finish her sentence; she stamped her little foot on the threadbare carpet, and then her firm lip began to quiver like a little child's. Her eyes were full of tears, but she pressed her hands on them with all her might, and when she took them away her cheek and forehead were white with their pressure. She smoothed her hair at the glass, and found some comfort in the process. She was not surprised. She had recognised the possibility of this desertion, and had determined what she should do next if Arthur Leeson failed her. Without a minute's delay, she got out the telegraph-form which she had kept ready for this emergency, 'Please come to my father,' she wrote. Then she took a shilling from her little store, put on her bonnet, and hurried to the neighbouring office, whence she despatched her telegram to that old friend of her father, Mr. Claudian Fairholme.

As, when a small steam launch with shudder and noise and black smoke has jerked and hurried through a tranquil reach of Thames, far behind it the stream is still disturbed with long heavings, so after the visit of his old friend and his old friend's daughter, was the peaceful life of Claudian Fairholme moved by slow waves of recollection. The studies which had absorbed him lost their charm; he began to wonder for the first time if it were really worth while to complete another translation of the Odes of Horace. He did not sleep so well as usual; but, though he woke in the middle of the night, he did not hear the nightingale. As the summer grew warmer and richer, the songs of birds were rare, and the nightingale was dumb. *Χλωρὴς ἀηδών*, murmured the wakeful Claudian, but from the thick leaves of trees no bird, daughter of Pandaros, Hellenic romantic and modern, would charm the listening ear of Master Faustus Fairholme. Some trouble had touched Claudian, and the deep joy of summer was tremulous with a deeper melancholy. He began to wonder if men grew old more quickly in solitude. Once in a quiet corner he assured himself that his gardener was not near, and then quickly and breathlessly vaulted over a gate. After that he felt better for a time. He had never thought about losing his youth, and now he supposed that he had lost it. Certainly he could not class himself with Arthur Leeson; and after all he did not wish to, only he began to ask himself whether his excellent gardener would be a wholly adequate companion of his declining years. When he found that he looked at his honest and sober gardener with a certain distaste, he felt sure that something was wrong with him; he wondered if

he needed change of air. Sitting listless in his garden with his long legs stretched out before him, Claudian was debating where he should seek change, when he saw his servant coming with a telegram. 'Please comb to my feather,' was written therein; but Claudian, who is a very clever man, understood the message in a moment. He gathered himself together and stood upright; he squared his shoulders and looked at the man with eyes which were slowly growing brighter.

'Pack clothes for a week,' he said, 'and borrow the Dean's dog-cart. I go to London by the next train.'

CHAPTER V.

It was a great evening in the little room behind the bar. The chance customer, who turned out of the crowded street to ask Polly for a glass, glanced with curiosity at the closed door, from beyond which came the sound of a full voice, rising and falling with a monotonous sing-song. The voice was the voice of the enthusiast, or at least was strangely like it. Certainly the enthusiast was not speaking; he could not have spoken if he would. He sat with his wild eyes fixed on the talented declaimer, as if the maintenance of his self-control depended on the fixity of his gaze. Even in that atmosphere of smoke and spirits and genial humanity, his face was cold and grey. The line in his cheek was sharp as if cut with a knife, and the lips behind their thin transparent veil of moustache were pressed together with a constant effort. Even yet he could hardly believe his ears. It seemed impossible that these young men, on whom he had been sure that he was exercising an ennobling influence, had got in a fellow to mock him. He had been confident that he was winning the hearts and teaching the minds of the young men of the people: he awoke in the midst of red or sodden faces, grinning over the new turn of the joke. And the joke was not wholly bad. The talented youth whom the enthusiast's friends had brought in was well worthy of those music-hall honours for which he longed. His cheeks and chin were fat and swarthy; his body was round and short; he might have been fed from the cradle on sausages and mashed potato. His little shiny moustache, though it grew on his upper lip, had the appearance of a theatrical property. He bore himself with a great deal of dignity; it was only his right eye which

was permitted to twinkle. Among his mates he had a great reputation; and when he had sat quiet in a corner for two evenings, he was able to offer a remarkable imitation of the enthusiast in his more inspired moments. He avoided his model's eyes, while his own right eye moved round the room and collected the respectful sympathy of his friends. His friends beamed and chuckled in the heated atmosphere. 'Let the wise man,' the humourist was saying, 'let the wise man shut his mouth, and let the bloomin' idiot go up on the platform! Let the judge stand in the dock and think, and let the habitual criminal have a turn at the judge's wig! O Law Courts old and new, O policemen, O police vans, O police horses, should we not all have a turn with you? Duchesses throng around me; they beg me to dance with them; they go on their knees to me; I will dance with the duchesses. I will dance too with the chimney-sweeps. The chimney-sweep shall dance with the duchess; I will *balancer* opposite with the scullery-girl. Adieu, and *au revoir*, O enchanting scullery-girl! Let us meet again at the Marble Arch, for that too is divine.'

The rhapsodist paused, and there was a burst of laughter and applause, the tinkling of glasses and a rush of admiring comments. Only Ferdinand seemed to have no proper appreciation of the humour: in humour there is every variety of taste.

'Covent Garden Market!' said the performer, in the enthusiast's most impressive tone—'Covent Garden Market! Onions, potatoes, carrots, turnips, parsnips, asparagus French and English (*O bon jour*, French asparagus, my brother!) Good vegetables and bad musty vegetables! Good sellers and bad musty sellers! And yet are the bad musty good, or better than the good. I devour the bad musty vegetables. O bouquets for misses and for the opera-girls! Empty waggons and full waggons, empty baskets and full baskets, empty people and full people! O Covent Garden Market! O dirt and smell and slime indescribable! I describe you all, I love you all, I wallow in you all. I too am a vegetable. I am likewise an animal, and an angel. Cool and sweet is the dewy grass, and the shore of the sea. Cool and sweet is the crowded London street. I strip myself naked in the grass, on the shore of the sea, in the crowded street. I am free and naked; the policemen run me in. Them also do I call brothers!'

There was a howl of laughter led by the most humorous and intelligent of the party. Ferdinand looked round for the first time, and his eyes were full of agony; he hid his face in his

hands. A minute later he started at a touch on his shoulder ; he looked up and saw his daughter, and he tried to smile. The girl, standing straight with her hand upon her father's shoulder, looked round on the assembly with open dislike and scorn. ' You ought to be ashamed of yourselves ! ' she cried, with a stamp of her little foot. Some of the young men sniggered ; and Claudian Fairholme, who had stopped a moment by the open door, strode to the girl's side, on fire with a wild wish to decrease the urban population. Into his mind came stirring words—' Over my head his arm he flung against the world.' He was ashamed of feeling heroic, but he wanted to shake somebody into unconsciousness for only daring to look at her. And they did look at her, all those reddened or pallid boys with mean eyes. She cared nothing for their looking, all her care was for her father ; she helped him to his feet and began to lead him away. Yet she could not help looking prettier for the flush of anger, and the young men stared at her from under their hat-brims, bold, yet ashamed, ashamed of their shame, and on the verge of proving their superiority to women by some show of insolence. As she went out with her hand in her father's hand, a young half-drunken hero, who was nearest to the door, sent forth a sort of crowing laugh, and added a term of endearment. In an instant, Claudian, who was covering his friends' retreat, had the young sinner by the throat. Whirled like a feather from the chair, and wavering on the points of his toes, with his face the colour of a ripening mulberry, the youth croaked for help. The room was in an uproar. The girl and her father were passing through the shop, and Claudian retiring backwards in the same narrow passage used the body of his victim as a shield. The dissipated youngsters pressed upon him, and Claudian thrust against them, with both arms, the helpless bulk of their comrade. There flashed through his mind a thought of the bow of Ulysses ; he shouted and hurled his burden at them, and they fell back before it. Then in a moment, into the clear space between the hero and the foe, flashed Polly the barmaid.

' Ain't you ashamed of yourselves ? ' she cried out lustily, and the sobered youth fell further back before her with a sudden thought of the police. Claudian laughed aloud, and came back a step to wring Polly's hand.

' There, get along, do ! ' said the maiden, and Claudian went.

Outside there was a four-wheeled cab, and the girl was waiting to see if he were safe.

'I will come and see how he is to-morrow,' said Mr. Fairholme at the cab window; and there looked out at him a little face illumined by the gaslight, and he saw that tears were shining on the long eyelashes.

'Curse me!' said Claudian in his teeth, as he strode down the street, and felt his eyes wink. He was English enough to swear at himself when he found that he was a man of sensibility.

CHAPTER VI.

CLAUDIAN gave all his time and the best of his thoughts to the help of his old friend and schoolfellow. Before Ferdinand had recovered from his crushing blow he was carried away from London; and when he looked up again and felt the first slight interest in his whereabouts, he was in the best arm-chair of Mr. Fairholme's study. His daughter was amazed by Claudian's energy, and declared again and again that she could do nothing for her father. Again and again she suggested, though somewhat faintly, that they should finish their visit, but she was met by the firm refusal of her host. It appeared that he would even detain them by force, and risk the legal consequences. Even his gardener, busy in the high-walled academic garden, felt that a change had come over Mr. Claudian Fairholme.

Claudian attended the enthusiast with unceasing devotion and consummate tact. He gave him silence and rest; he followed his excellent cook into her very kitchen, with directions and prescriptions of food; he gathered from a mass of journals every tale which showed that somewhere in the world of struggling men and women were virtue and valour and love. When his friend was in his darkest mood he left him alone. Gradually the dark moods grew shorter and less dark. Slowly the enthusiasm crept back to the enthusiast, and the shadow of despondency passed slowly away. And then Claudian made his great suggestion. He proposed that Ferdinand should express his political faith in a big book, and asked that he might be allowed to be a fellow-worker with his old friend. The heart of the enthusiast leapt up like fire. The dream of his boyhood had been that Claudian and he should do some noble work together. He had never doubted that his friend had genius, and that with him he might move the world. Mountains seemed a little thing; it was the world which

was to be shoved a little in the right direction. After all, there was nothing like a book. A book, as Claudian said, might be read by millions. Perhaps not at once, as Claudian admitted, but if not to-day, then to-morrow; if not to-morrow, in fifty years. Perhaps centuries hence it might instruct and cheer a brighter and a better generation. There was to be a book; that was a great fact, and who could dare to limit its possible influence? The enthusiast's eye grew bright again. He looked afar off, and beheld the procession of the ages, while Claudian pushed silently under his nose the most tempting paper and a bundle of the best quill pens. So the two friends went to work at the big book, and the enthusiast throve on it like a silkworm on a mulberry leaf. Like a spider of genius he sat and spun a beautiful and symmetrical web, which seemed like woven moonshine, while Claudian brought fragments of old books and new journals for his nourishment. And Claudian worked well and cheerfully, and found his weekly wages in the growing vigour of his friend and the gradual effacement of the sharp lines in his cheek. And if Ferdinand was so full of zeal that he never thought of gratitude, he had a daughter who was grateful, and who made no secret of it, but spoke her thanks and wonder frankly and prettily.

It was well that Claudian Fairholme found his reward in the growing health of his friend; for while the faith of the enthusiast waxed with each day's work, the faith of his colleague waned. Each morning he felt more and more like an *aéronaut's* boy, whose privilege it was to fill the big balloon. Very like to a big balloon seemed the book on which he worked so zealously. In the book was an ideal society—a world as it ought to be.

'All men shall be born free,' said Ferdinand. 'All men shall be equal,' said Ferdinand. 'Each man shall love all other men with a love just less by one hundredth part than the love which he has for himself.' This arrangement was necessary to prevent an extravagant society in which A sacrificed himself with passion to B, B to C, and C to A, every man pursuing his neighbour with loathed benefits, and flying in terror from his neighbour's kindness. The enthusiast demanded but three laws, and he would show you a world in which it was worth while to live. Only three small anchors were needed for the big balloon; but the anchors seemed to Claudian to be fixed in the morning dew, and he looked that the balloon, being full of gas, would float beyond the earth's attraction and into the rare atmosphere of Saturn, where, as a

great orator knows, general propositions about human action are absolutely true. Claudian, after helping with the bellows, found it necessary to go into the village and talk to the men and women, or to the boys and girls; or to go to afternoon service in the great Cathedral, or—and this was best of all—to discuss household affairs and her father's health with the enthusiast's daughter. For the rest, he grew more and more firm in the belief that no man could be free, that no two men were equal, and that the love for your neighbour could not be always the same, nor measured with a nice exactitude like doctor's stuff. Such indeed was the effect of his labours, that at some moments he was inclined to go straight into Parliament, and there and then to take his part in the tinkering which a healthy, ancient, and illogical society so frequently demands. He was glad as a boy that the big book did his friend so much good; he swore to himself that he would spare himself no effort till it was finished; and he registered another secret vow that the big book should be published—at his own expense, if necessary—and that the enthusiast should never know. So months rolled away, and the great work grew. Nor was this the only thing which grew, for when the nightingale came back, there was love too in the garden.

The girl was a little impatient. She had been moving about with a basket and garden-scissors till she was tired of being alone. She pulled off her little gauntleted glove, and pulled it on again; she stood still and looked at the open window of the study. Then Claudian came out through the window, and her lip showed her little white teeth, and she put down her basket that she might put both the little garden gloves into his big hands.

'How is he getting on?' she asked, with the pretty eyebrows raised.

'Like a house on fire,' said Claudian, looking down at her with pride.

'I never should have believed it—never!' she remarked emphatically.

'What shouldn't you have believed?'

'That I should let *anybody* take care of him for me.' She nodded towards the study.

'And take care of you too,' he suggested. 'Do you remember,' he added, as they moved away down the garden, 'the morning when you came here first, and made tea for me, and told me all the gossip about our friends at Nessborough, about dances, and pups, and boys, and weddings?'

'I was very shy,' she said gravely, 'and that was why.'

'Oh, you were shy, were you? I thought it was I who was shy.'

'How silly!' she said; 'how could you be shy? You are——'

'An old man,' he suggested. 'You didn't think then that you would promise to marry an old man, did you? Do you remember how you abused some girl for being too composed a bride?'

'It must have been Delia Wentworth,' she said. 'I never did see anyone so calm; but I am sure I didn't abuse her. You ought not to say that I ever abuse anybody.'

'I wonder if you will be a beautifully composed bride, or will exhibit a becoming agitation. What is the proper manner for an elderly bridegroom?'

She looked up at him not smiling at all. 'I think you are exceedingly silly,' she said; 'it's very wrong of you to call yourself old.'

'I am old enough to be your father.'

'That has nothing to do with it.' As she looked up at him, she remembered the swaying youth in his fist, and her lips relaxed into a smile.

'I am young,' he said; 'I am absurdly young; I am just twenty. As for you, you are not grown up, I hope; you are absurdly small; you are too small to be married in a big Cathedral.'

She deigned to return no answer. Presently the enthusiast came to the study window and looked into the garden. He stood staring and drawing the fingers of his left hand down through his long thin beard; but neither his daughter nor his devoted friend saw him. Nor did they care, as they strolled together in the monastic garden, whether a nightingale were singing or a goose cackling. The wonder and the beauty of the world touched the heart of the enthusiast, and his eyes were filled with tears.

JULIAN STURGIS.

The Macready Riot in New York.

BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

EARLY in the autumn of 1848, Mr. Macready paid another, and, as it proved, a final visit to the United States. He appeared in New York in October, at the Astor Place Opera House, for a few nights; after which he made a highly successful tour of the principal cities of the Union, returning to New York the following spring. It was announced that he would appear in a round of Shakesperean characters, opening on May 7 in *Macbeth*, always a favourite part of his, and undoubtedly one of his finest impersonations.

A most unfounded and absurd rumour had obtained currency in the city that the ill success Mr. Edwin Forrest, the American actor, had met with in England a short time previously, was attributable to jealousy on the part of Mr. Macready, who, it was asserted, had exercised the influence he was supposed to possess with the dramatic critics of the leading London journals, to induce them to review Mr. Forrest's performance unfavourably. The partisans of the American tragedian, fully believing this to be the case, determined to avenge what they conceived to be the wrongs of their countryman by driving Mr. Macready from the stage.

Notwithstanding that this intention was openly avowed, and it was well known throughout the city that a serious disturbance might be anticipated on the night in question, the municipal authorities, with strange supineness, took no other measures for the enforcement of order than placing three or four additional policemen on duty at the Opera House.

Even before the curtain rose, from the general aspect of the house it was palpable that a very considerable proportion of the audience in the amphitheatre and parquet had come there for the express purpose of creating a riot, since, under ordinary circumstances, the prices of admission would have been such as to deter members of the 'rowdy' class, to which they evidently belonged, from visiting the Opera House, even had not the

general character of the performances which took place there been *caviare* to them.

Mr. Macready's entry upon the stage was the signal for an outburst of the wildest uproar. Not only was he greeted with a perfect storm of hisses, but every opprobrious epithet the vocabulary of the Bowery Bhoys—and it is an extensive one—affords, was levelled at him. Nor was this all, for, in a few minutes, sticks, bottles, and other missiles were thrown from various parts of the house; and, finally, three or four heavy chairs were hurled from the amphitheatre on to the stage. Perceiving that it was hopeless to attempt to obtain a hearing, and that his longer presence on the scene would not only endanger his own life but imperil those of the other performers, Mr. Macready retired. Satisfied with having effected their object, the rioters, as soon as the curtain fell, quietly left the theatre, and dispersed to their several homes.

The following day the respectable portion of the press was unanimous in its condemnation of the outrage to which Mr. Macready had been exposed. Nor was this all. Several of the leading citizens of New York, indignant at the insult offered to an eminent foreign artist, and conscious of the stigma that would rest upon the community were he permitted to be driven from the city by mob violence, convened a meeting to decide what steps it would be advisable under the circumstances to take. The result was that a committee was formed, and a letter drawn up and addressed to Mr. Macready, in which regret was expressed for the indignity that had been offered him, and an emphatic pledge given that if he would reconsider his avowed intention of not again playing in New York, and would consent to repeat his performance of *Macbeth* on any evening that might be agreeable to him, the amplest measures should be taken to prevent the recurrence of the disgraceful scene of the previous night.

Mr. Macready, although deeply hurt by the unprovoked attack that had been made upon him, consented, at the urgent solicitation of several personal friends, to return a favourable answer to the communication of the committee, and fixed the following Thursday for his reappearance at the Opera House.

On the Wednesday placards were exhibited in various parts of the city, headed 'An Appeal to British Seamen.' They purported to emanate from the Anglican residents of New York, and they called upon the English sailors belonging to the vessels lying in the harbour to support their countryman against 'a clique of

American ruffians.' The language was in fact, throughout, that of studied insult to the native population, and was well calculated thoroughly to irritate those against whom it was directed.

The following morning there were to be seen in all the leading thoroughfares another set of handbills, professing to have been issued in reply to those of the 'insolent foreigners.' In these latter ones it was asserted that the crew of the Cunard steamer, then lying at the wharf in Jersey city, had threatened with violence all who ventured to express disapproval of the performance at the 'aristocratic' Opera House, and 'working men' were urged 'to stand by their rights.'

It may be stated here, that the 'Appeal to British Seamen' and the 'Reply' to it both emanated from one and the same source, and were simply an ingenious *ruse* on the part of those who instigated the disturbances to exasperate the populace against Mr. Macready—a design in which they were only too successful. This was at a later period most conclusively demonstrated during the trial of 'Ned Buntline,' one of the rioters, who was proved to have been the individual who gave the printer the order for *both* the placards.

In consequence of the serious aspect affairs had assumed, a large body of police was instructed to attend at the Opera House on the Thursday evening; and, in the event of this force proving inadequate for the preservation of order, the 7th Regiment, New York State Militia, two troops of horse of the 8th Regiment, and a squadron of Hussars were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to appear upon the scene should their presence be deemed requisite.

The block of buildings in which the Opera House then stood forms a small right-angled triangle, whereof the base rests upon Broadway, the perpendicular upon Eighth Street, and the hypotenuse upon Astor Place. The theatre was situated at the junction of Astor Place and Eighth Street, and was consequently exposed to attack both in front and rear. For some time before the doors opened, a crowd assembled on the Astor Place side of the house, in the composition of which the 'rowdy' element was decidedly prominent. In anticipation that an attempt might possibly be made by the mob to force an entrance into the theatre, some fifteen or twenty policemen were stationed at the doors in Astor Place, by which alone the public were admitted; those on Eighth Street being on this occasion closed and barred.

Matters were in this position when, accompanied by a friend,

I arrived at the Opera House. On the wall was a notice stating that all the tickets had been sold, but having purchased ours earlier in the day, we presented them and were admitted without difficulty.

The house inside was filled in some parts, although not crowded, but in the amphitheatre many of the seats were vacant. The general appearance of the audience was respectable—more so than I had anticipated—and at first I hoped that no serious attempt would be made to repeat the disgraceful tumult of the preceding Monday.

The first two scenes of the play passed off quietly, with the exception that a vociferous welcome was accorded to Mr. Clarke (an American), the Macduff of the evening. The entrance of Macbeth in the third scene was, however, the signal for a perfect storm of cheers, groans, and hisses. The whole audience rose, and the greater proportion of it, who were friendly to Mr. Macready, cheered, waving their hats and handkerchiefs. A considerable body of malcontents, nevertheless, in the parquet, second tier, and amphitheatre, hissed and hooted with equal zeal.

The tumult lasted some ten or fifteen minutes, and then an effort was made to restore peace by a board being brought upon the stage upon which was written 'The friends of order will remain quiet.' This silenced all but the rioters, who continued by their clamour to drown all sound of what was said on the stage. Not a word, in fact, of the first act of the play could be heard by anyone in the house. But as no personal violence was offered the performers, the police seemed to consider themselves not justified in interfering to prevent the manifestation of what Lovelace, in 'Clarissa,' styles 'tumultuous disapprobation' on the part of the audience. Towards the close of the act, however, the chief of police made his appearance in the theatre, and by his orders all those individuals who were active in fomenting the disturbances were one by one removed from the auditorium.

This took some little time, a very determined resistance being offered by several of the rioters. Still, before the close of the second act so many of them had been ejected that something of the play could be heard. As the inside of the house became quieter, the wild uproar of the mob without was distinctly audible. The crowd grew more and more violent, heavy stones being continually hurled at the windows on the Astor Place side of the theatre. One after another was smashed, and pieces of brick and paving-stone rattled in a heavy shower upon the balcony and

lobbies, until the Opera House resembled rather a besieged fortress than a place dedicated to the amusement of a civilised community.

The third, fourth, and fifth acts of the play were given in comparative quiet, so far as the audience was concerned, although the din and uproar without grew momentarily more deafening. Still the performance went on. At the words of Macbeth—

I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam *forest* come to Dunsinane—

the audience caught the allusion, and cheered heartily. The phrase, too—

Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn—

was loudly applauded.

In spite of the constant rattling and crashing of stones and other missiles against the boards by which it had been sought to protect the windows, and the fierce yells of the infuriated mob without, the tragedy was played to the end, and the curtain fell. Mr. Macready was, of course, called out, as were also several of the other performers.

Some apprehensions—in which I confess I shared—were entertained that when the audience quitted the house they would run the risk of being roughly handled by the crowd, which, aware that all those individuals who were unfriendly to Mr. Macready had been ejected from the theatre, would necessarily regard those who had sat out the play as his partisans. When, however, the doors on the Eighth Street side of the building were thrown open to afford egress to the audience, I, in common with others, was agreeably disappointed to discover that the street, which in the earlier part of the evening had been filled by the mob, was perfectly empty, a cordon of soldiers being drawn across either end of it.

The audience was directed by the police to take the turning which led to Broadway, as in the direction of the Bowery the crowd was some thousands strong, and it would be difficult, not to say dangerous, for anyone to attempt to make his way through it. As, in conformity with this advice, we all hastened down the street, and passed into Broadway, a volley of musketry was fired on the Astor Place side of the Opera House. The majority of those persons who had composed the audience quickly sought

safety by turning into the side streets. But some few—myself amongst them—whose curiosity was stronger than their fears, hurried on to the corner of Broadway and Astor Place, where a full view could be obtained of the tragedy that was then being enacted in front of the theatre. But before describing the scene which then met my eyes, I must briefly narrate what had previously occurred.

It appears that the mob, which during the early part of the evening had not committed any acts of actual violence, contenting themselves with hooting every well-dressed person who entered the theatre, had, as the darkness increased, grown bolder, and had proceeded to break the street lamps in Astor Place and to smash the front windows of the Opera House. By an unlucky accident it so happened that a sewer was being constructed in the Bowery, near Eighth Street, and large heaps of cobble-stones were lying for some distance on either side of the roadway, affording the crowd a practically inexhaustible supply of missiles with which to carry on their attack.

The police finding themselves quite incapable of maintaining their ground against the overwhelming numbers opposed to them, the military were sent for. The cavalry arrived first on the ground, and there can be very little doubt that had they been well mounted and properly trained, they might have cleared the street without the necessity of shedding blood. They were, however, neither one nor the other, and being saluted with a shower of stones as they endeavoured to ride through Astor Place, the frightened animals they bestrode became unmanageable. Some of the men were unhorsed, and the others found that, so far from being able to act on the offensive, it was as much as they could do to keep their saddles. In a few minutes, in fact, all order and discipline were lost, and the officer in command of the troop, perceiving the utter inability of his men to cope with the crowd, withdrew them, the rioters saluting the soldiers with ironical cheers as they rode off.

Shortly afterwards the 7th Regiment (infantry) arrived on the ground. It was barely three hundred strong, but it enjoyed, and justly, the reputation of being the best drilled corps in the whole city. The men formed on Astor Place, and in view of the menacing aspect of the mob, they were ordered to load with ball cartridge. They then wheeled round into Eighth Street, and proceeded to clear it between Broadway and the Bowery, driving the rioters before them with levelled bayonets. Having posted a

guard at either end of the street, the troops marched back to Astor Place and attempted to repeat the same manœuvre there, but unsuccessfully. They did, indeed, force the people back some little distance, but the crowd—which numbered at least twelve or fifteen thousand persons—was too strong for them, and being assailed by a shower of missiles from all directions, the soldiers were compelled to fall back upon the side walk in front of the Opera House, where the walls of the building afforded protection to their rear. Whilst occupying this position, not only did heavy stones continue to be thrown, but shots from pocket pistols and revolvers began to be fired at them. Captain Shumway received a ball in the leg, and the cheek of General Hull was grazed by a bullet. As man after man fell out of the ranks, badly hurt, the exasperation of their comrades became intense, and repeated demands were made that they should be permitted to fire on the rioters. This was, however, for some little time refused. At last, after an ineffectual attempt had been made by both the Sheriff and the Recorder to address the crowd, in the faint hope of being able to induce the people to disperse without having recourse to sterner measures, the troops were ordered to act on the offensive. The men were instructed to fire, in the first instance over the heads of the crowd, and they did so. The rioters perceiving, as the smoke cleared away, that no one was hurt, and believing that blank cartridges only had been, or would be used, were irritated rather than dismayed by this demonstration. With fierce execrations they rushed upon their adversaries, in the expectation that they would be able to crush them by sheer force of their numerical superiority. The peril of the troops was imminent, and they fired a second time, but on this occasion, point blank at the mob. In so densely packed a mass of human beings nearly every shot told; several of the rioters were killed, whilst numbers were more or less severely wounded.

It was at this juncture that I and those who accompanied me reached the corner of Broadway and Astor Place, where a spectacle met our eyes which I, for one, shall not easily forget.

The crowd, evidently roused to frenzy by the fall of their comrades, advanced to the attack with reckless hardihood. The front rank of the soldiers received the rioters with levelled bayonets, the second line firing from behind. For some minutes the conflict was of the most determined character. Showers of missiles rained upon the troops, who replied at intervals with volleys of musketry. The street lamps had been extinguished,

and the darkness was only broken every now and again by flashes from the guns of the soldiery. Then, for an instant, could be seen the vast assemblage of people surging to and fro in wild excitement, whilst savage yells and hideous imprecations mingled with the shrieks of the wounded and groans of the dying.

Finally the crowd, whose stock of stones had become exhausted, fell back upon the Bowery for a fresh supply. Perceiving their purpose, and that a renewal of the attack was imminent, General Sandford drew his men up across Astor Place, with orders to fire obliquely in the direction of the open space at the intersection of the Fourth Avenue and the Bowery, where some thousands of the rioters were congregated. The soldiers fired a volley, and with such fatal effect, that the mob, thoroughly cowed at last, broke and fled, leaving twenty-two men dead upon the ground. How many, in all, were wounded, was never exactly known, as those who were not mortally hurt were, in most instances, carried off by their friends; but the total number of casualties must have been at least a hundred. Of the soldiers, strange to say, not one was killed, but several were severely injured.

Thus ended the most serious theatrical riot that has ever occurred in any city of the United States; the result, however, being to teach the 'rowdy' classes a lesson they were not likely readily to forget.

It only remains to add that Mr. Macready quitted the theatre as soon as it was ascertained that the mob had been dispersed; and, as his remaining in New York would have exposed him to considerable personal peril, he left the city at once for New Rochelle, escorted by a party of friends. He passed the remainder of the night in that village, and in the morning started for Boston, whence, a few days thereafter, he sailed for England.

W. C. MILLER.

A Pilgrimage to Selborne.

A SHORT TIME AGO I had an opportunity of visiting a scene the features of which had long dwelt in my imagination, though I had never yet been able to bring the accuracy of the picture which it formed out of them to the test of personal observation. In the middle of last January, however, finding myself at the town of Alton, not more than five miles distant from the peaceful old Hampshire village which the loving hand of its native historian has immortalised, I resolved no longer to postpone my pilgrimage to what must always be known to posterity as White's Selborne. I started from Alton on foot, about eleven in the morning, the day being all that could be desired—a cloudless blue sky, the air freshened and nothing more by a slight frost, and all the range of woods which spread along the ridges of the downs just tinged with that hazy purple flush

That shows the year is turned.

All the way, on the right-hand side, the ground slopes down to a little valley, threaded by a narrow brook, rising again at the distance of a mile or two into the long hills which at Selborne turn abruptly southwards, and of which the Selborne Hanger forms the elbow. You see little or nothing of the village till you are quite close to it; for it lies in a little bottom, into which the Alton road descends by a steep decline—not the old rocky lane which was literally the only channel of communication with Alton in the last century, and which is now disused, as are the lanes on the other side of the village in the direction of Liss and Petersfield, but a good modern road—from which, however, little is visible but the church tower and one end of the Parsonage, which lie on some rising ground to the left.

On this side of the Parsonage the ground sinks abruptly into a narrow dingle, divided by the infant stream which forms the north-west boundary of the village; and White used to delight himself with imagining how easily this green knoll might be made to represent a fortified position.

High on a mound th' exalted gardens stand;
Beneath deep valleys scooped by Nature's hand;
A Cobham here exulting in his art
Might blend the general's with the gardener's part;

Might fortify with all the martial trade
Of rampart, bastion, fosse, and palisade ;
Might plant the mortar with wide threatening bore,
Or bid the mimic cannon seem to roar.

Invitation to Selborne.

Approaching Selborne from this quarter, we have the Hanger immediately to our right, running parallel with the south side of the village, and rising to the height of about three hundred feet. Keeping straight up the village street, we are confronted by a high garden wall, forming one side of a road turning towards the Hanger. Inside this wall is the kitchen-garden of 'The Wakes,' as the house is still called, in which the old naturalist lived ; and a few yards further on, and facing the street, is the north side of the house itself, and the entrance from the road. Leaving it behind us for the present, we come upon a wide open space upon our left, which we at once pronounce to be the 'Plestor,' for the origin of which we must refer our readers to the historian, and above this again lies the church and churchyard, in which still stands the enormous yew-tree, twenty-five feet in girth, the finest, I think, I have ever seen. Beyond the church, on the same side of the way, is the principal village inn, the 'Queen's Arms,' and beyond this again the other little stream which, rising from a spring in the Nore Hill, forms one branch of the river Wey, and bounds the village on the east, as the other one does upon the west. The road out of Selborne in this direction leads to Woolmer Forest, Temple, the Priory Farm, and Blackmore, now the property of Lord Selborne.

Before, however, we reach the little bridge which spans the tiny brook, we observe a kind of cart-track to the right which seems to lead up to the Hanger, and, consulting a labourer on the subject, find that it is so ; and, having now got a general idea of the village and its bearings, it is time to examine it more particularly. I feel that I am bound to climb up the Hanger, and turn down the path accordingly ; but when I get to the foot of the hill, I see that my work is cut out for me. A winding path called 'the zigzag,' literally corresponding to the name, has here been cut in the side of the hill ; and as it is nearly perpendicular, and yesterday's rain and the morning's frost combined have made the chalk as slippery as ice, by the time I arrive at the top I am not sorry to sit down upon a stile and rest. White himself had either made, or caused to be made, another road up the hill called the Bostal, which I could not find, and in his time the whole village was divided into the two rival factions of Zigzagians and Bostalians.

From a cottage close by a very civil old lady now emerges and offers to describe the prospect. I am here, it must be premised, standing at the eastern extremity of the Hanger, with the village behind and below me on the left, and the long line of the Sussex Downs in front. It seems to have been from this point that White took the view which he describes in his 'Invitation :'

Romantic spot, from whence in prospect lies
Whate'er of landscape charms our feasting eyes.

And it was here, we learn from the same poem, that he and his friends used to come to drink tea on a fine summer's evening. The old lady has her lesson by heart. That bold swelling hill thickly covered with wood on our right front is Nore Hill, 'that noble chalk promontory,' as White calls it. Straight before us is Temple, where are still some vestiges of a preceptory, described at length in the antiquities of Selborne; and beyond lies 'Oolmer Farst,' as our guide pronounces it, where she tells me that when a child she used often to go 'a hurting,' which means, being interpreted, Woolmer Forest, and gathering whortleberries or bilberries. There is the broad, flat, sandy, heathery tract, which, in White's time, was entirely uncultivated, and full of game and wild fowl. One of the principal ponds which he describes has been drained. But Woolmer Pond, 'the vast lake,' as he calls it, is still there, though invisible from the summit of the Hanger, whence the traveller looks down only on a bare brown expanse gradually terminating in highlands which bound the horizon to the east. That abrupt, broken point of hill just opposite in the extreme distance is Rake Down in Sussex, and the one which seems to nod to it on the left is Blackdown, not far from Haslemere: still further to the left is Hindhead; and the two peaks just visible on one side of it are the Devil's Jumps. Hard by, though of course not visible from Selborne, is the Devil's Punch Bowl, and the reader will remember how Nicholas Nickleby and Smike, plodding along the Portsmouth road, walked upon the rim of it, and read the inscription on the stone commemorating the murder once committed there.

Still ranging round towards the left, the eye falls on Farnham Holt and the village of Kingsley, and nearer home again, on a corner of Lord Selborne's park, on the Priory Farm, and on a low woody dingle, as it seems at this distance, leading up to it, once a favourite walk of Gilbert White's, and still known as 'The Liths' or 'Lyths,' otherwise 'bends' or winding paths. In the first edition of the book there is an engraving of the 'Short Lyth,' with

gentlemen and ladies standing and sitting in the foreground, the full wigs and long canes of the former not looking very much in harmony with the landscape. Where the Priory Farm now stands was the site of Selborne Priory, of which the old lady can only tell us that 'they have dug up a many things there for burying folk,' and that great multitudes of people go to see it in the summer-time. She went on to say that I ought to come again in the summer myself, and undertook to make tea for me, if I would, near the spot, as I conjecture, where White himself used to make it. So giving her the required promise, and having drunk my fill of the landscape, which White must have loved as Wordsworth loved the English lakes, and Walter Scott his grey hills—as only one can love such things who is thoroughly in sympathy with nature and nature's works—I turn my back on 'Oolmer Farst' and proceed westward along the summit of the Hanger, looking down upon the village at intervals through the leafless beech-trees, and searching for some other mode of descent than the one by which I came up.

Presently I hear sounds of talking and laughing near at hand, and come upon a group of village girls in a spot which would have fascinated Linnell: a little broken glade with its felled trunks lying among patches of brushwood, and hemmed in by the tall beech-trees, whose smooth glistening stems of grey russet and yellow stretch far away into the sylvan gloom. The girls, who are gathering firewood, can show me no regular path down the hill; and I have let myself down as well as I can with the help of an ash stick which I have just cut, steadying my steps where it is possible against either the trees themselves or their 'old fantastic roots,' and gradually arriving at the bottom without any serious misadventure. The Hanger, as I have said, is about three hundred feet high, very steep, and perhaps three-quarters of a mile in length. It forms the northern slope of Selborne Hill, which stretches a long way in the opposite direction, and at each end it just overlaps the village, from which it is separated by a strip of cultivated land some three or four hundred yards in breadth. It is covered from end to end with beech-trees, which, as they are very close, are not very large in the girth, but which, looked at from the outside, must in summer seem a solid wall of green. A footpath runs along the bottom just inside the wood, and from this I think some of the prettiest views of the village are to be obtained: one in particular I noticed, where the church tower, and the great yew-tree, and a portion of the Parsonage-house mingle themselves with the

mossy thatched roofs of some barns and cottages, into a very picturesque group. But it is now nearly two o'clock. I have yet to see the house, the garden, and the church, and, though last, not least, to obtain some modest refreshment after my fatiguing scrambles. I strike away to the village once more, and make the best of my way to the 'Queen's Arms.'

While consuming the cheese, bottom crust, and Hall's Alton ale which this hostelry affords, I question my host about the village and its traditions; but he knows nothing, and thinks I had better consult the sexton, whose father and grandfather were both sextons before him. In the meantime, however, I must see 'The Wakes,' which, having stood empty for some time after the death of its late owner, Professor Bell, has now again a tenant, who very courteously showed us over the whole house, in which most of the old rooms are still left, though the arrangements of them have been altered, and the whole has been considerably enlarged. What was the kitchen in White's time is now the present occupier's study, looking out upon the garden and the Hanger. What was White's study is the drawing-room, floored and panelled with oak just as he left it; but the west wall has been pulled down, and a large additional space taken into the room, which nearly doubles the size of it. On the garden side it has been refronted, and this is that new part of the house which alters the general effect of it so much. On this side, too, was White's 'new parlour,' now the dining-room; to which he refers in his letters to his brother, while his old dining-room, looking towards the village street, is now the kitchen—a most comfortable-looking room, in which it is easy to imagine the old gentleman sipping his glass of port or punch, or that famous strong beer brewed with rain water, which was so highly appreciated by his neighbours; and ruminating on the various sights and sounds which had greeted him during the morning: the appearance of the first swallow, the first note of the missel-thrush, or the strange fancy of his guinea-fowls for roosting on the tops of high trees during a hard frost. His dinner hour seems to have been about three o'clock, and it was in this very room that he was just sitting down to dinner almost exactly a hundred years ago—to be more particular, on June 5, 1784—when the great thunderstorm burst over Selborne, and the hailstones broke all his north windows. His bedroom is now used as a nursery.

On the south side of the house the view is very pretty.. The lawn and garden run down to a low fence dividing them from a large paddock of about twenty acres, dotted over with fine old trees, and running close up to the Hanger, which bounds the

prospect. From this side the house looks almost like two houses. At one end, to the right, is the old gable covered with creepers and untouched by the hand of renovation; to the left is the new red brick front, where are the dining-room and drawing-room of the present owner; yet the whole effect is not bad, and when time has toned down the colours, and fresh creepers have had time to grow, it will probably be as pretty as it ever was. In the garden is White's sundial, and in the paddock, about a hundred yards from the garden, are the remains of his summer-house. A narrow bricked path about a foot wide laid down by White himself leads across the grass from the garden to the summer-house, which also was the work of the naturalist's own hand. This summer-house, though now in ruins, is a very interesting relic, as what there is of it is quite unaltered. The very table at which he used to sit, a little round piece of oak, once supported by a single claw, lies broken in two upon the floor. The sides are lined with moss and heather as fresh as on the day he died; and though the wind has blown off the roof, and levelled one of the trees by which the sides were supported, it is still propped up by an ash, a maple, and a holly, which keep it from tumbling down altogether. The iron railings by which it was surrounded have been torn down, and it has a desolate and forlorn appearance. But it requires no effort of the imagination to restore it as it was when our dear old friend used to trot down his little brick path on a summer morning, spectacles on nose, and the newly-arrived packet from Pennant or Barrington in hand, to study at leisure what they had to say about his theories of migration; about the habits of the chaffinch or the reed-sparrow; or to concoct, perhaps, an answer to any crude hypothesis which might have been incautiously suggested to him on the subject of fieldfares.

I stood and gazed at the old summer-house and the little brick path with immense interest and attraction, and felt myself for the first time really in the presence of Gilbert White as he lived and moved among his own contemporaries. His square-skirted coat, knee-breeches, and ribbed worsted stockings; his square-toed thick shoes, his wig, his loose cravat, his spectacles, his cane, were all before me. My eyes became moist, and I turned slowly away to look for Timothy, whom I almost expected to find 'made up' for the winter in some 'dry wholesome sunny spot in the fruit border.' To the kitchen garden, at all events, I wended my way next; and that must be very little altered from what it was in the days when Timothy roamed about it, screening himself from the sun under a large cabbage leaf or 'the waving forest of an

asparagus bed.' There is the same wall, I make no doubt, which in 1773 produced '10 dozen lovely peaches and nectarines.' Here were his cucumber frames; and here what remains of the 'fine sloping laurel hedge,' another favourite haunt of Timothy, which was so damaged by frost in 1784. But to enumerate all the objects which I recognise or seem to recognise in this hallowed spot would carry me far beyond my limits; and it is time I said a few words about the *genius loci* himself.

It is difficult in these days to realise the complete seclusion of a place like Selborne a hundred years ago, or the difference which time has wrought both in its social and its natural productions. In bad weather it must have been almost isolated; and even when the roads were passable the experience of the majority of its inhabitants did not probably extend beyond the two quiet little towns of Alton and Petersfield. We can gather the best idea of what such a village must have been from the 'Raveloe' of Silas Marner, and it is easy to understand how in this

Rural, sheltered, unobserved retreat

White's days glided tranquilly away, 'with scarcely any other vicissitudes than those of the seasons.' It would be hard to find a better exemplification of that happy rural life depicted by the ancient poets than we find in the blameless and untroubled existence of this amiable man. *Fortunate senex*—to whom was allotted neither riches nor poverty, a secure and certain home in the house of his fathers, abundant leisure for the prosecution of his favourite studies, and, greater boon than all, to grow old among the scenes of his childhood—

Felix qui patriis ævum transegit in agris;
Ipsa domus puerum quem vidit, ipsa senem.

This is that 'sweet monotony' extolled by George Eliot as a deeper source of happiness than all the variety in the world; and it is this undisturbed repose, this confirmed tranquillity, by which the life of the last century was prominently distinguished from our own. In those blissful days of non-improvement no landmarks were removed, either moral or material; and a man could rise every morning and go to bed every night in the happy confidence that all around him would be the same to-morrow as it was to-day, and for what he knew to the end of time. It seems probable that some such moral atmosphere is necessary to the growth of men like Gilbert White. For it is not only the closeness of his observation and the extent of his knowledge in natural history which delight us in his pages. The tone of satisfaction and con-

tentment which they everywhere breathe ; a love of, and devotion to, nature, unbroken by that strife and trouble of the outer world which nowadays penetrates to the remotest recesses of our island ; the image, in short, of a perfectly happy man which they constantly reflect, contribute at least an equal share of the pleasure which they inspire.

It is this peculiar combination which constitutes the charm of White's Selborne, and enables us thoroughly to enjoy a walk with him in the woods or in the forest without slaking all his scientific curiosity. He possesses, too, a quiet humour of his own, not seldom found in similar characters, which appears most frequently in his more familiar letters, and only glimmers very faintly, even if it is visible at all, in his natural history. As an example of what we mean, we would instance his account of his hayrick in a letter to Mr. Barber in 1786, and Timothy's letter to his former mistress, which is quite in the style of the *Spectator*. He is said to have been a taciturn man, of rather retiring manners ; and few anecdotes or reminiscences of his private life survive among the representatives of his family. But his character and habits have been perpetuated for ever by his own hand, and creep into our study of imagination during a stroll through his beloved Selborne 'as though he lived indeed.'

Were he to rise from the dead, he would find the fauna of the district much changed. The village boys would look in vain for a raven's nest in 'Losels,' and the kite has wheeled himself away to far remote regions. I remember that many years ago I saw a wild raven, the only one I ever did see, in the woods near Trotton, at no great distance from Selborne. But his voice had a sound of 'never more' in it even then ; and he has croaked his last by this time, I should think, through the whole district. White tells us that a large flock of wood-pigeons used to haunt the Hanger from November to February. I saw none about the fields in January, though of course there must be wood-pigeons—ringdoves I mean—at Selborne as in every other part of England. But with the multiplication of guns and the decrease of the beech woods their numbers have probably diminished. He mentions what I can corroborate myself, that a flock of wood-pigeons, when disturbed at roost, make a noise like thunder when they rush out in a body from the tree-tops. I remember once stopping to light a pipe under a long avenue of elm trees one pitch-dark winter's night, and the sudden roar of wings as I struck the match was quite appalling. It appears from White's book that the stockdove—the real wood-pigeon with no white ring round his neck—did not

breed about Selborne ; and that White was very uncertain whether it built at all in England. But Professor Bell found a nest in the hollow of an old pollard ash, and I have known one myself in a similar situation. The rooks, however, I suppose, are as numerous as ever, and I saw them in the evening wending their way towards the large woods at Tisted just as White himself describes them.

It now only remained for me to discover the sexton and view the interior of the church, which had but lately been restored. I found in this official a very civil and intelligent guide, but even he could tell me little of what I was in search of—the personal appearance, habits, and conversation of the Rev. Gilbert. His grandfather, he said, had known him well ; but all that he had overheard was that he was ‘a square-built man of what you’d call medium statue,’ and that he was ‘very quiet.’ During the last seven years of his life he took the duty for the Vicar, and regularly read prayers and preached. My companion, however, remembered his niece very well, Miss Mary White, who lived in the house after her uncle’s death, down to 1839, when the property was bought by Mr. Bell. There is nothing very remarkable inside the fine old church, which consists of a chancel, nave, and two aisles. It contains several monuments to the White family, and one to Gilbert in the chancel. The pew in which he sat was in the middle of the nave ; and the grave in which he now sleeps is on the north side, distinguished by a simple stone with the letters G. W. engraved on it.

The Plestor was formerly much larger than it is, and the old oak, which was blown down in 1703, stood within what is now the churchyard. A sycamore now stands in the Plestor, which the sexton thought must have stood there in White’s time. But I did not see this part of the village to much advantage, as the ground had been poached up by carts during the restoration of the church, and still bore a rather squalid and uncared-for look.

It was now four o’clock, and I had a six-mile walk home to my friend’s house on a short winter afternoon : so, as I had expended my three hours to pretty good advantage, though of course I had not seen nearly all which a lover of Gilbert White would wish to see, I dismissed my cicerone, and, turning my back on the village, set off again up the hill to Alton. I need not carry my adventures any further, and only hope my readers will not think me an egotist if I mention the lively satisfaction with which I sat down to a well-earned dinner, and gave my entertainers the benefit, in two senses, of a thoroughly well-spent day.

T. E. KERBEL.

Madam.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER XVI.

‘THE mother might have managed better, Rosie—why wasn’t I sent for? I’m the eldest and the heir, and I ought to have been here. Poor old papa—he would miss me, I know. He was fond of me because I was the biggest. He used to tell me things. I ought to have been sent for. Why didn’t she send for me, Rosalind?’

‘I have told you before, Rex. We did not know. When I went out in the afternoon he was better and all going well; and when I came back—I had only been in the park—he was dying. Oh, you should be rather glad you were not there. He took no notice of any one, and Death is terrible. I never understood what it was——’

Reginald was silent for a little. He was sufficiently awestricken even now by the sensation of the closed shutters and darkened house. ‘That may be,’ he said, in a softened voice, ‘but though you did not know, she would know, Rosie. Do you think she wanted me not to be there? Russell says——’

‘Don’t speak to me of that woman, Rex. She killed my father——’

‘Oh, come, Rosie, don’t talk nonsense, you know. How could she kill him? She wanted to tell him something that apparently he ought to have known. It was *that* that killed him,’ said the boy, with decision.

They were sitting together in one of the dark rooms: Reginald in the restless state of querulous and petulant unhappiness into which enforced seclusion, darkness, and the cessation of all active occupation, warp natural sorrow in the mind of a young creature full of life and movement; Rosalind in the partially soothed exhaustion of strong but simple natural feeling. When she spoke of her father the tears came; but yet already this great event was over, and her mind was besieged, by moments, with thoughts of the new life to come. There were many things to think of.

Would everything go on as before under the familiar roof, or would there be some change? And as for herself, what was to be done with her? Would they try to take her from the side of her mother and send her away among strangers? Mrs. Trevanion had retired after her husband's death to take the rest she wanted so much. For twenty-four hours no one had seen her, and Jane had not allowed even Rosalind to disturb the perfect quiet. Since then she had appeared again, but very silent and self-absorbed. She was not less affectionate to Rosalind, but seemed further away from her, as if something great and terrible divided them. When even the children were taken to their mother they were frightened and chilled by the dark room and the cap which she had put on over her beautiful hair, and were glad when the visit was over and they could escape to their nursery, where there was light, and many things to play with. Sometimes children are the most sympathetic of all living creatures; but when it is not so, they can be the most hard-hearted. In this case they were impatient of the quiet, and for a long time past had been little accustomed to be with their mother. When she took the two little ones into her arms, they resigned themselves with looks half of fright at each other, but were very glad, after they had hugged her, to slip down and steal away. Sophy, who was too old for that, paced about and turned over everything. 'Are those what are called widow's caps, mamma? Shall you always wear them all your life, like old widow Harvey, or will it only be just for a little while?' In this way Sophy made herself a comfort to her mother. The poor lady would turn her face to the wall and weep, when they hurried away, pleased to get free of her. And when Reginald came home, he had, after the first burst of childish tears, taken something of the high tone of the head of the house, resentful of not having been called in time, and disposed to resist the authority of Uncle John, who was only a younger brother. Madam had not got much comfort from her children, and between her and Rosalind there was a distance which wrung the girl's heart, but which she did not know how to surmount.

'Don't you know,' Reginald said, 'that there was something that Russell had to tell him? She will not tell me what it was; but if it was her duty to tell him, how could it be her fault?'

'As soon as mamma is well enough to think of anything, Russell must go away.'

'You are so prejudiced, Rosalind. It does not matter to me; it is a long time since I had anything to do with her,' said the

boy, who was so conscious of being the heir. 'But for the sake of the little ones I shall object to that.'

'You!' cried Rosalind, with amazement.

'You must remember,' said the boy, 'that things are changed now. The mother of course will have it all in her hands (I suppose) for a time. But it is I who am the head. And when she knows that I object——'

'Reginald,' his sister cried; 'oh, how dare you speak so? What have you to do with it?—a boy at school.'

A flush came over his face. He was half ashamed of himself, yet uplifted by his new honours. 'I may be at school—and not—very old: but I am Trevanion of Highcourt now. I am the head of the family, whatever Uncle John may say.'

Rosalind looked at her young brother for some time without saying anything, with an air of surprise. She said at last with a sigh, 'You are very disappointing, Rex. I think most people are. One looks for something so different. I thought you would be sorry for mamma and think of her above everything, but it is of yourself you are thinking. Trevanion of Highcourt! I thought people had the decency to wait at least until—— Papa is in the house still,' she added, with an overflow of tears.

At this Reginald, who was not without heart, felt a sudden constriction in his throat, and his eyes filled too. 'I didn't mean,' he said, faltering, 'to forget papa.' Then after a pause, he added, 'Mamma, after all, won't be so very much cut up, Rosie. He—bullied her awfully. I wouldn't say a word, but he did, you know. And so I thought perhaps she might get over it—easier——'

To this argument what could Rosalind reply? It was not a moment to say it, yet it was true. She was confused between the claims of veracity and that most natural superstition of the heart which is wounded by any censure of the dead. She cried a little; she could not make any reply. Mrs. Trevanion did not show any sign of taking it easily. The occupation of her life was gone. That which had filled all her time and thoughts had been removed entirely from her. If love had survived in her through all that selfishness and cruelty could do to destroy it, such miracles have been known. At all events the change was one to which it was hard to adapt herself, and the difficulty, the pain, the disruption of all her habits, even perhaps the unaccustomed thrill of freedom, had such a confusing and painful effect upon her as produced all the appearances of grief. This was what Rosalind felt, wondering within herself whether, after all she had borne, her mother

would in reality 'get over it easier,' as Reginald said, a suggestion which plunged her into fresh fields of unaccustomed thought when Reginald left her to make a half-clandestine visit to the stables; for neither grief nor decorum could quench in the boy's heart the natural need of something to do. Rosalind longed to go and throw herself at her mother's feet, and claim her old place as closest counsellor and confidant. But then she paused, feeling that there was a natural barrier between them. If it should prove true that her father's death was a relief to his oppressed and insulted wife, that was a secret which never, never could be breathed in Rosalind's ear. It seemed to the girl in the absoluteness of her youth as if this must always stand between them, a bar to their intercourse which once had no barriers, no subjects that might not be freely discussed. When she came to think of it, she remembered that her father never had been touched upon as a subject of discussion between them; but that indeed was only natural. For Rosalind had known no other phase of fatherhood, and had grown up to believe that this was the natural development. When men were strong and well, no doubt they were more genial; but sick and suffering, what so natural as that wives and daughters, and more specially wives, should be subject to all their caprices? These were the conditions under which life had appeared to her from her earliest consciousness, and she had never learned to criticise them. She had been indignant at times and taken violently Mrs. Trevanion's side; but with the principle of the life Rosalind had never quarrelled. She had known nothing else. Now, however, in the light of these revelations, and the penetration of ordinary light into the conditions of her own existence, she had begun to understand better. But the awakening had been very painful. Life itself had stopped short and its thread was broken. She could not tell in what way it was to be pieced together again.

Nothing could be more profoundly serious than the aspect of Uncle John as he went and came. It is not cheerful work at any time to make all the dismal arrangements, to provide for the clearing away of a life with all its remains, and make room for the new on the top of the old. But something more than this was in John Trevanion's face. He was one of the executors of his brother's will; he and old Mr. Blake, the lawyer, who had come over to Highcourt, had held what seemed a very agitating consultation in the library, from which the old lawyer came forth 'looking as if he had been crying,' Sophy had reported to her sister. 'Do gentlemen ever cry?' that inquisitive young person

had added. Mr. Blake would see none of the family, would not take luncheon, or pause for a moment after he had completed his business, but kept his dog-cart standing at the door, and hurried off as soon as ever the conference was over, which seemed to make John Trevanion's countenance still more solemn. As Reginald went out, Uncle John came into the room in which Rosalind was sitting. There was about him, too, a little querulousness, produced by the darkened windows and the atmosphere of the shut-up house.

'Where is that boy?' he said, with a little impatience. 'Couldn't you keep him with you for once in a way, Rosalind? There is no keeping him still or out of mischief. I did hope that you could have exercised a little influence over him—at this moment at least.'

'I wish I knew what to do, Uncle John. Unless I amuse him I cannot do anything; and how am I to amuse him just now?'

'My dear,' said Uncle John, in the causeless irritation of the moment, 'a woman must learn to do that whether it is possible or not. Better that you should exert yourself a little than that he should drift among the grooms, and amuse himself in that way. If this was a time to philosophise, I might say that's why women in general have such hard lives, for we always expect the girls to keep the boys out of mischief, without asking how they are to do it.' When he had said this, he came and threw himself down wearily in a chair close to the little table at which Rosalind was sitting. 'Rosie,' he said, in a changed voice, 'we have got a terrible business before us. I don't know how we are to get out of it. My heart fails me when I think——'

Here his voice stopped, and he threw himself forward upon the table, leaning his elbow on it, and covering his face with his hand.

'You mean—Wednesday, Uncle John?' She put out her hand and slid it into his which rested on the table, or rather placed it, small and white, upon the brown clenched hand, with the veins standing out upon it, with which he had almost struck the table. Wednesday was the day appointed for the funeral, to which, as a matter of course, half the county was coming. She pressed her uncle's hand softly with hers. There was a faint movement of surprise in her mind that he, so strong, so capable of everything that had to be done, should feel it so.

He gave a groan. 'Of what comes after,' he said. 'I can't tell you what a terrible thing we have to do. God help that poor

woman. God forgive her if she has done wrong, for she has a cruel punishment to bear.'

'Mamma?' cried Rosalind, with blanched lips.

He made no distinct reply, but sat there silent, with a sort of despair in the pose of every limb. 'God knows what we are all to do,' he said, 'for it will affect us all. You, poor child; you will have to judge for yourself. I don't mean to say or suggest anything. You will have to show what mettle is in you, Rosalind; you as well as the rest.'

'What is this terrible thing?' said Rosalind. 'Oh, Uncle John, can't you tell me? You make me wretched; I fancy I don't know what.'

John Trevanion raised himself from the table. His face was quite colourless. 'Nothing that you can fear will be so bad as the reality,' he said. 'I cannot tell you now. It would be wrong to say anything till she knows; but I am as weak as a child, Rosie. I want your hand to help me; poor little thing, there is not much strength in it. That hour with old Blake this morning has been too much both for him and me.'

'Is it something in the will?' cried Rosalind, almost in a whisper. He gave a little nod of assent; and got up and began to pace about the room, as if he had lost power to control himself.

'Charley Blake will not show. He is ashamed of his share in it: but I suppose he could do nothing. It has made him ill, the father says. There's something—in Dante, is it?—about men being possessed by an evil spirit after their real soul is gone. I wonder if that is true. It would almost be a sort of relief to believe—'

'Uncle John, you are not speaking of my father?—'

'Don't ask any questions, Rosalind. Haven't I told you I can't answer you? The fact is, I am distracted with one thing and another, all the business coming upon me, and I can't tell what I am saying. Where is that boy?'

'I think he has gone to the stables, Uncle John. It is hard upon him, being always used to the open air. He doesn't know what to do. There is nothing to amuse him.'

'Oh, to be sure, it is necessary that his young lordship should be amused,' cried John, with something like a snarl of disgust. 'Can't you manage to keep him in the house at least, with your feminine influence that we hear so much of? Better anywhere than among those grooms, hearing tales perhaps—Rosie, forgive me,' he cried, coming up to her suddenly, stooping over her and kissing her, 'if I snap and snarl even at you, my dear; but I am altogether distracted, and don't know what I am saying or doing.'

Only, for God's sake, dance or sing, or play cards, or anything, it does not matter what you do—it will be a pious office; only keep him indoors, where he will hear no gossip; that would be the last aggravation—or go and take him out for a walk, it will be better for you both to get into the fresh air.'

CHAPTER XVII.

THUS a whole week of darkness and depression passed away.

Mr. Trevanion was a great personage in the county. It was fit that all honour should be done him. All the greatest persons in the neighbourhood had to be convened to conduct him in due state to his other dwelling among the marbles of the mausoleum which his fathers had built. It had been necessary to arrange a day that would suit everybody, so that nothing should be subtracted from this concluding grandeur; and accordingly Highcourt remained, so to speak, in its suit of sables, with blinds drawn down and shutters closed as if darkness had veiled this part of the earth. And indeed, as it was the end of November, the face of the sky was dim with clouds, and heavy mists gathered over the trees, adding a deeper gloom to the shut-up house within. Life seemed to be congealed in the silent rooms, except when broken by such an outburst of impassioned feeling as that which John Trevanion had betrayed to Rosalind. Perhaps this relieved him a little, but it put a burden of vague misery upon her which her youth was quite unequal to bear. She awaited the funeral with feverish excitement, and a terror to which she could give no form.

The servants in a house are the only gainers on such an occasion: they derive a kind of pleasure from such a crisis of family fate. Blinds are not necessarily drawn down in the housekeeper's room, and the servants' hall is exempt from those heavier decorums which add a gloom abovestairs; and there is a great deal to talk about in the tragedy that is past and in the new arrangements that are to come, while all the details of a grand funeral give more gratification to the humbler members of the family, whose hearts are little affected, than they can be expected to do to those more immediately concerned. There was a stir of sombre pleasure throughout the house in preparation for the great ceremony which was being talked of over all the county: though Dorrington and his subordinates bore countenances more solemn than it is possible to portray, even that solemnity was part of the gloomy festival, and the current of life below was quickened by the many comers and goers

whose office it was to provide everything that could show 'respect' to the dead. Undertakers are not cheerful persons to think of, but they brought with them a great deal of commotion which was far from disagreeable, much eating and drinking and additional activity everywhere. New mourning liveries, dresses for the maids, a flutter of newness and general acquisition lightened the bustle that was attendant upon the greater event. Why should some score of people mourn because one man of bad temper, seen perhaps once or twice a day by the majority, by some never seen at all, had been removed from the midst of them? It was not possible; and as everything that is out of the way is more or less a pleasure to unembarrassed minds, there was a thrill of subdued satisfaction, excitement, and general complacency, forming an unfit yet not unnatural background to the gloom and anxiety above. The family assembled at their sombre meals, where there was little conversation kept up, and then dispersed to their rooms, to such occupations as they could find, conversation seeming impossible. In any case a party at table must either be cheerful—which could not be looked for—or be silent, for such conversation as is natural while still the father lies dead in the house is not to be maintained by a mixed company around a common meal.

The doctor, who of course was one of the party, did his best to introduce a little variety into the monotonous meetings, but John Trevanion's sombre countenance at the foot of the table was enough to have silenced any man, even had not the silence of Mrs. Trevanion and the tendency of Rosalind to sudden tears, been enough to keep him in check. Dr. Beaton, however, was Reginald's only comfort. They kept up a running talk, which perhaps even to the others was grateful as covering the general gloom. Reginald had been much subdued by hearing that he was to return to school as soon as the funeral was over. He had found very little sympathy with his claims anywhere, and he was very glad to fall back upon the doctor. Indeed if Highcourt was to be so dull as this, Rex could not but think school was far better. 'Of course I never meant,' he said to his sister, 'to give up school—a fellow can't do that. It looks as if he had been sent away. And now there's those tiresome examinations for everything, even the Guards.'

'We shall be very dull for a long time,' said Rosalind. 'How could it be possible otherwise? But you will cheer us up when you come home for the holidays; and oh, Rex, you must always stand by mamma!'

‘By mamma! Rex said with some surprise. Why she will be very well off—better off than any of us.’ He had not any chivalrous feeling about his mother. Such a feeling we all think should spring up spontaneously in a boy’s bosom, especially if he has seen his mother ill-used and oppressed; but as a matter of fact this assumption is by no means to be depended on. A boy is at least as likely to copy a father who rails against women, and against the one woman in particular who is his wife, as to follow a vague general rule, which he has never seen put in practice, of respect and tender reverence for woman. Reginald had known his mother as the doer of everything, the endurer of everything. He had never heard that she had any weakness to be considered, and had never contemplated the idea that she should be put upon a pedestal and worshipped; and if he did not hit by insight of nature upon some happy medium between the two, it was not perhaps his fault. In the meantime, at all events, no sentiment on the subject inspired his boyish bosom.

Mrs. Trevanion, as these days went on, resumed gradually her former habits, so far as was possible in view of the fact that all her married life had been devoted to her husband’s service, and that she had dropped one by one every pursuit that separated her from him. The day before the funeral she came into the little morning room in which Rosalind was sitting, and drew a chair to the fire. ‘I had almost forgotten the existence of this room,’ she said. ‘So many things have dropped away from me. I forget what I used to do. What used I to do, Rosalind, before—’

She looked up with a pitiful smile. And indeed it seemed to both of them as if they had not sat quietly together, undisturbed, for years.

‘You have always done—everything for everybody—as long as I can remember,’ said Rosalind, with tender enthusiasm.

She shook her head. ‘I don’t think it has come to much use. I have been thinking over my life, over and over, these few days. It has not been very successful, Rosalind. Something has always spoiled my best efforts. I wonder if other people feel the same? Not you, my dear, you know nothing about it: you must not answer with your protestations. Looking back, I can see how it has always failed somehow. It is a curious thing to stand still, so living as I am, and look back upon my life, and sum it up as if it were past.’

‘It is because a chapter of it is past,’ said Rosalind. ‘Oh, mamma, I do not wonder! And you have stood at your post till the last moment; no wonder you feel as if everything were over.’

‘Yes, I stood at my post : but perhaps another kind of woman would have soothed him when I irritated him. Your father—was not kind to me, Rosalind——’

The girl rose and put her arms round Mrs. Trevanion’s neck and kissed her. ‘No, mother,’ she said.

‘He was not kind. And yet, now that he has gone out of my life I feel as if nothing was left. People will think me a hypocrite. They will say I am glad to be free. But it is not so, Rosalind, remember : man and wife, even when they wound each other every day, cannot be nothing to each other. My occupation is gone—I feel like a wreck cast upon the shore.’

‘Mother ! how can you say that when we are all here, your children, who can do nothing without you ?’

‘My children—which children ?’ she said, with a wildness in her eyes as if she did not know what she was saying ; and then she returned to her metaphor like one thinking aloud ; ‘like a wreck—that perhaps a fierce high sea may seize again, a high tide, and drag out upon the waves once more. I wonder if I could beat and buffet those waves again as I used to do, and fight for my life——’

‘Oh, mother, how could that ever be?—there is no sea here.’

‘No, no sea—one gets figurative when one is in great trouble—what your father used to call theatrical, Rosalind. He said very sharp things—oh, things that cut like a knife. But I was not without fault any more than he ; there is one matter in which I have not kept faith with him. I should like to tell you, to see what you think. I did not quite keep faith with him. I made him a promise, and—I did not keep it. He had some reason, though he did not know it, in all the angry things he said.’

Rosalind did not know what to reply ; her heart beat high with expectation. She took her stepmother’s hand between hers, and waited, her very ears tingling, for the next word.

‘I have had no success in that,’ Mrs. Trevanion said, in the same dreary way, ‘in that no more than the rest. I have not done well with anything ; except,’ she said, looking up with a faint smile, and brightening of her countenance, ‘you, Rosalind, my own dear, who are none of mine.’

‘I am all of yours, mother,’ cried the girl ; ‘don’t disown me, for I shall always claim you—always. You are all the mother I have ever known.’

Then they held each other close for a moment, clinging to each other. Could grief have appeared more natural ? the wife and daughter, in their deep mourning, comforting each other,

taking a little courage from their union: yet how many strange unknown elements were involved. But Mrs. Trevanion said no more of the confidence she had seemed on the point of giving. She rose shortly after and went away, saying she was restless and could not do anything, or even stay still in one place. 'I walk about my room and frighten Jane, but that is all I can do.'

'Stay here, mamma, with me, and walk about, or do what you please. I understand you better than Jane.'

Mrs. Trevanion shook her head,—but whether it was to contradict that last assertion or merely because she could not remain, it was impossible to say. 'To-morrow,' she said, 'will be the end, and, perhaps, the beginning. I feel as if all would be over to-morrow. After that, Rosalind——'

She went away with the words on her lips. 'After to-morrow.' And to Rosalind, too, it seemed as if her powers of endurance were nearly ended, and to-morrow would fill up the sum. But then, what was that further mysterious trouble which Uncle John feared?

Mrs. Trevanion appeared again to dinner, which was a very brief meal, but retired immediately; and the house was full of preparation for to-morrow—every one having or seeming to have something to do. Rosalind was left alone. She could not go and sit in the great vacant drawing-room, all dimly lighted, and looking as if some party of the dead might be gathered about the vacant hearth, or in the hall, where now and then some one of the busy nameless train of to-morrow's ceremony would steal past. And it was too early to go to bed. She wrapt herself in a great shawl, and opening the glass door stole out into the night. The sweeping of the chill night air, the rustle of the trees, the stars twinkling overhead, gave more companionship than the silence and gloom within. She stood outside on the broad steps leaning against one of the pillars, till she got chilled through and through, and began to think, with a kind of pleasure, of the glow of the fire.

But as she turned to go in, a great and terrible shock awaited her. She had just come away from the pillar which altogether obliterated her slight dark figure in its shadow and gave her a sort of invisibility, when the glass door opened at a touch, and some one else came out. They met face to face in the darkness. Rosalind uttered a stifled cry; the other only by a pant of quickened breathing acknowledged the alarm. She was gliding past noiselessly, when Rosalind, with sudden courage, caught her by the cloak in which she was wrapped from head to foot. 'Oh,

not to-night, oh, not to-night!' she said, with a voice of anguish; 'for God's sake, mother, mother, not to-night!'

There was a pause, and no reply but the quick breathing, as if the passer-by had some hope of concealing herself. But then Madam spoke in a low hurried tone. 'I must go; I must! but not for any pleasure of mine!'

Rosalind clung to her cloak with a kind of desperation. 'Another time,' she said, 'but not, oh, not to-night.'

'Let me go. God bless my dear. I cannot help it. I do only what I must. Rosalind, let me go,' she said.

And next moment the dark figure glided swiftly, mysteriously among the bushes towards the park. Rosalind came in with despair in her heart. It seemed to her that nothing more was left to expect or hope for. Her mother, the mistress of this sad house, the wife of the dead who still lay there awaiting his burial. At no other moment perhaps would the discovery have come upon her with such a pang; and yet at any moment what could it be but misery? Jane was watching furtively on the stairs to see that her mistress's exit had been unnoticed. She was in the secret, the confidant, the — But Rosalind's young soul knew no words; her heart seemed to die within her. She could do or hope no more.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALL was dark; the stars twinkling ineffectually in the sky, so far off, like spectators merely, or distant sentinels, not helpers; the trees in all their winter nakedness rustling overhead, interrupting the vision of these watchers; the grass soaked with rain, and the heavy breath of winter, slipping below the hurrying feet. There was no sound, but only a sense of movement in the night as she passed. The most eager gaze could scarcely have made out what it was—a shadow, the fitting of a cloud, a thrill of motion among the dark shrubs and bushes, as if a faint breeze had got up suddenly and was blowing by. At that hour there was very little chance of meeting anybody in those damp and melancholy glades, but the passenger avoided all open spaces until she had got to some distance from the house. Even then as she hurried across her muffled figure was quite unrecognisable. It was enough to raise a popular belief that the park was haunted, but no more. She went on till she came to a thick copse about half-way between the house and the village. Then another figure

made a step out of the thick cover to receive her, and the two together withdrew entirely into its shade.

What was said there, what passed, no one, even though skirting the copse closely, could have told. The whisperers, hidden in its shade, were not without an alarm from time to time: for the path to the village was not far off, and sometimes a messenger from the house would pass at a distance whistling to keep his courage up, or talking loudly if there were two, for the place was supposed to be ghostly. On this occasion the faint movement among the bare branches would stop, and all be as still as death. Then a faint thrill of sound, of human breathing returned. The conversation was rapid. 'At last!' the other said; 'do you know I have waited here for hours these last nights?'

'You knew it was impossible. How could I leave the house in such circumstances? Even now I have outraged decency by coming. I have gone against nature——'

'Not for the first time,' was the answer, with a faint laugh.

'If so, you should be the last to reproach me—for it was for you.

'Ah, for me! that is one way of putting it. Like all those spurious sacrifices if one examined a little deeper—— You have had the best of it anyhow.'

'All this,' she said with a tone of despair, 'has been said so often before. It was not for this you insisted on my coming. What is it? Tell me quickly, and let me go before I am found out. Found out! I am found out already. I dare not ask myself what they think.'

'Whatever they think you may be sure it is not the truth. Nobody could guess at the truth. It is too unnatural, that I should be lurking here in wretchedness, and you——'

'But you are comfortable,' she said quickly. 'Jane told me——'

'Comfortable according to Jane's ideas, which are different from mine. What I want is to know what you are going to do; what is to become of me? Will you do me justice now, at last?'

'Oh, Edmund, what justice have you made possible? What can I do but implore you to go? Are not you in danger every day?'

'Less here than anywhere; though I understand there have been inquiries made; the constable in the village shows a degree of interest——'

'Edmund,' she cried, seizing him by the arm, 'for God's sake, go.'

'And not bring shame upon you, Madam? Why should I mind? If I have gone wrong, whose fault is it? You must take

that responsibility one time or other. And now that you are free——'

'I cannot defy the law,' she said with a miserable moan. 'I can't deliver you from what you have done. God knows, though it had been to choose between you and everything else, I would have done you justice, as you say, as soon as it was possible. But to what use now? It would only direct attention to you—bring the ——' She shuddered, and said no more.

'The police, you mean,' he replied with a careless laugh. 'And no great harm either, except to you; for of course all my antecedents would be published. But there are such things as disguises, and I am clever at a make-up. You might receive me, and no one would be the wiser. The cost of a new outfit, a new name—you might choose me a nice one. Of all places in the world, a gentleman's house in the country is the last where they would look for me. And then if there was any danger you could swear I was——'

'Oh, Edmund, Edmund, spare me! I cannot do this—to live in a deception under my children's eyes.'

'Your children's eyes!' he said, and laughed. The keen derision of his tone went to her very heart.

'I am used to hear everything said to me that can be said to a woman,' she said quickly, 'and if there was anything wanting you make it up. I have had full measure, heaped up and running over. But there is no time for argument now. All that might have been possible in other circumstances; now there is no safety for you but in getting away. You know this, surely, as well as I do. The anxiety you have kept me in it is impossible to tell. I have been calmer since he is gone: it matters less. But for your own sake——'

The other voice said, with a change of tone, 'I am lost anyhow. I shall do nothing for my own sake——'

'Oh, Edmund, Edmund, do not break my heart—at your age! If you will only set your mind to better ways, everything can be put right again. As soon as I know you are safe I will take it all in hand. I have not been able hitherto, and now I am afraid to direct observation upon you. But only go away; let me know you are safe: and you have my promise I will pay anything, whatever they ask.'

'Misprision of felony! They won't do that; they know better. If there is any paying,' he said, with his careless laugh, 'it had much better be to me.'

'You shall be provided,' she said breathlessly, 'if you will only think of your own safety and go away.'

'Are you sure, then, of having come into your fortune? Has the old fellow shown so much confidence in you? All the better for me. Your generosity in that way will always be fully appreciated. But I would not trouble about Liverpool; they're used to such losses. It does them no harm, only makes up for the salaries they ought to pay their clerks, and don't.'

'Don't speak so lightly, Edmund. You cannot feel it. To make up to those you have—injured——'

'Robbed, if you like, but not injured. That's quite another matter. I don't care a straw for this part of the business. But money,' he said, 'money is always welcome here.'

A sigh which was almost a moan forced itself from her breast. 'You shall have what you want,' she said. 'But, Edmund, for God's sake, if you care either for yourself or me, go away.'

'You would do a great deal better to introduce me here. It would be safer than Spain. And leave it to me to make my way. A good name—you can take one out of the first novel that turns up—and a few good suits of clothes. I might be a long-lost relative come to console you in your distress. That would suit me admirably. I much prefer it to going away. You should see how well I would fill the post of comforter——'

'Don't!' she cried; 'don't!' holding out her hands in an appeal for mercy.

'Why?' he said, 'it is far the most feasible way, and the safest, if you would but think. Who would look for an absconded clerk at Highcourt, in the midst of family mourning and all the rest of it? And I have views of my own—— Come, think it over. In former times I allow it would have been impossible, but now you are free.'

'I will not,' she said, suddenly raising her head. 'I have done much, but there are some things that are too much. Understand me, I will not. In no conceivable circumstances, whatever may happen. Rather will I leave you to your fate.'

'What!' he said, 'and bring shame and ruin on yourself?'

'I do not care. I am desperate. Much, much would I do to make up for my neglect of you, if you can call it neglect; but not this. Listen! I will not do it. It is not to be mentioned again. I will make any sacrifice, except of truth—except of truth!'

'Of truth!' he said, with a sneer; but then was silent, evidently convinced by her tone. He added, after a time, 'It is all

your fault. What was to be expected? I have never had a chance. It is just that you should bear the brunt, for it is your fault.'

'I acknowledge it,' she said; 'I have failed in everything; and whatever I can do to atone I will do it. Edmund, oh listen! Go away. You are not safe here. You risk everything, even my power to help you. You must go, you must go,' she added, seizing him firmly by the arm in her vehemence; 'there is no alternative. You shall have money, but go, go! Promise me that you will go.'

'If you use force——' he said, freeing himself roughly from her grasp.

'Force? what force have I against you?—It is you who force me to come here and risk everything. If I am discovered, God help me, on the eve of my husband's funeral, how am I to have the means of doing anything for you? You will understand that. You shall have the money: but promise me to go.'

'You are very vehement,' he said. Then after another pause, 'That is strong, I allow. Bring me the money to-morrow night, and we shall see.'

'I will send Jane.'

'I don't want Jane. Bring it yourself, or there is not another word to be said.'

Mrs. Trevanion got back, as she thought, unseen to the house. There was nobody in the hall when she opened noiselessly the glass door, and flung down the cloak she had worn among the wraps that were always there. She went upstairs with her usual stately step; but when she had safely reached the shelter of her own room, she fell into the arms of the anxious Jane, who had been waiting in miserable suspense, fearing discovery in every sound. She did not faint. Nerves strong and highly braced to all conclusions, and a brain yet more vigorous, still kept her vitality unimpaired, and no merciful cloud came over her mind to soften what she had to bear: there are some to whom unconsciousness is a thing never accorded—scarcely even in sleep. But for a moment she lay upon the shoulder of her faithful servant, getting some strength from the contact of heart with heart. Jane knew everything; she required no explanation. She held her mistress close, supporting her in arms that had never failed her, giving the strength of two to the one who was in deadly peril. After a time Mrs. Trevanion roused herself. She sat down shivering in the chair which Jane placed for her before the fire. Warmth has a soothing effect upon misery. There was a sort of restoration in it and possibility of calm. She told all that had passed to the

faithful woman who had stood by her in all the passages of her life—her confidant, her go-between : other and worse names, if worse can be, had been ere now expended upon Jane.

‘Once more,’ Madam said, with a long sigh, ‘once more ; and then it is to be over, or so he says at least. On the night of my husband’s funeral day ; on the night before—— What could any one think of me, if it were known ? And how can I tell that it is not known ?’

‘Oh, dear Madam, let us hope for the best,’ said Jane. ‘Besides, who has any right to find fault now ? Whatever you choose to do, you have a right to do it. The only one that had any right to complain——’

‘And the only one,’ said Mrs. Trevanion, with sudden energy, ‘who had no right to complain.’ Then she sank back again into her chair. ‘I care nothing for other people,’ she said ; ‘it is myself. I feel the misery of it in myself. This night, of all others, to expose myself—and to-morrow. I think my punishment is more than any woman should have to bear.’

‘Oh, Madam, do not think of it as a punishment.’

‘As what, then—a duty ? But one implies the other. God help us. If I could but hope that after this all would be over, at least for the time. I have always been afraid of to-morrow ; I cannot tell why. Not because of the grave and the ceremony : but with a kind of dread as if there was something in it unforeseen, something new. Perhaps it is this last meeting which has been weighing upon me—this last meeting, which will be a parting, too, perhaps for ever——’

She paused for a moment, and then burst forth into tears. ‘I ought to be thankful. That is the only thing to be desired. But when I think of all that might have been, and of what is—of my life all gone between the one who has been my tyrant, and the other—the other against whom I have sinned. And that one has died in anger, and the other—oh, the other !’

It was to Jane’s faithful bosom that she turned again to stifle the sobs which would not be restrained. Jane stood supporting her, weeping silently, patting with pathetic helplessness her mistress’s shoulder. ‘Oh, Madam,’ she said, ‘who can tell ? his heart may be touched at the last.’

CHAPTER XIX.

NEXT day there was a great concourse of people at Highcourt, disturbing the echoes which had lain so silent during that week of

gloom. Carriages with the finest blazons, quartered and coronetted, men of the greatest importance, peers, and those commoners who hold their heads higher than any recent peers, M.P.'s, the lord lieutenant and his deputy, everything that was noted and eminent in those parts. The procession was endless, sweeping through the park towards the fine old thirteenth-century church, which made the village notable, and in which the Trevanion chantry, though a century later in date, was the finest part; though the dark opening in the vault, canopied over with fine sculptured work, and all that pious art could do to make the last resting-place beautiful, opened, black as any common grave, for the passage of the departed. There was an unusual band of clergy gathered in their white robes to do honour to the man who had given half of them their livings, and all the villagers, and various visitors from the neighbouring town, shopkeepers who had rejoiced in his patronage, and small gentry to whom Madam had given brevet rank by occasional notice. Before the procession approached, a little group of ladies, in crape from head to foot and closely veiled, were led in by the curate reverently through a side door. A murmur ran through the gathering crowd that it was Madam herself who walked first, with her head bowed, not seeing or desiring the curate's anxiously offered arm. The village had heard a rumour of trouble at the great house, and something about Madam, which had made the elders shake their heads, and remind each other that she was a foreigner and not of these parts, which accounted for anything that might be wrong; while the strangers who had also heard that there was a something, craned their necks to see her through the old ironwork of the chancel screen, behind which the ladies were introduced. Many people paused in the midst of the service, and dropped their prayer-books to gaze again, and wonder what she was thinking now, if she had indeed, as people said, been guilty. How must she feel when she heard the deep tones of the priest, and the organ pealing out its *Amens*. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Had he forgiven her before he died? Was she broken down with remorse and shame, or was she rejoicing in her heart, behind her crape veil, in her freedom? It must not be supposed, because of this general curiosity, that Madam Trevanion had lost her place in the world, or would not have the cards of the county showered upon her with inquiries after her health from all quarters; but only that there was 'a something' which gave piquancy, such as does not usually belong to such a melancholy ceremonial,

to the great function of the day. The most of the audience, in fact, sympathised entirely with Madam, and made remarks as to the character of the man so imposingly ushered into the realm of the dead, which did not fit in well with the funeral service. There were many who scoffed at the hymn which was sung by the choirs of the adjacent parishes, all in the late Mr. Trevanion's gift, and which was very, perhaps unduly, favourable to the 'dear saint' thus tenderly dismissed. He had not been a dear saint; perhaps, in such a case, the well-known deprecation of *trop de zèle* is specially appropriate. It made the scoffer blaspheme to hear so many beautiful qualities attributed to Mr. Trevanion. But perhaps it is best to err on the side of kindness. It was, at all events, a grand funeral. No man could have desired more.

The third lady who accompanied Mrs. Trevanion and her daughter was the Aunt Sophy to whom there had been some question of sending Rosalind. She was the only surviving sister of Mr. Trevanion, Mrs. Lennox, a wealthy widow, without any children, to whom the Highcourt family were especially dear. She was the softest and most goodnatured person who had ever borne the name of Trevanion. It was supposed to be from her mother, whom the Trevanions in general had worried into her grave at a very early age, that Aunt Sophy got a character so unlike the rest of the family. But worrying had not been successful in the daughter's case; or perhaps it was her early escape by her marriage that saved her. She was so apt to agree with the last person who spoke, that her opinion was not prized as it might have been by her connections generally; but everybody was confident in her kindness. She had arrived only the morning of the funeral, having come from the sick-bed of a friend whom she was nursing, and to whom she considered it very necessary that she should get back; but it was quite possible that, being persuaded her sister-in-law or Rosalind had more need of her, she might remain at Highcourt, notwithstanding that it was so indispensable that she should leave that afternoon, for the rest of the year.

The shutters had been all opened, the blinds raised, the windows let in the light, the great doors stood wide when they came back. The house was no longer the house of the dead, but the house of the living. In Mr. Trevanion's room, that chamber of state, the curtains were all pulled down already, the furniture turned topsy turvy, the housemaids in possession. In proportion as the solemnity of the former mood had been, so was the anxiety

now to clear away everything that belonged to death. The children in their black frocks came to meet their mother, half reluctant, half eager. The incident of papa's death was worn out to them long ago, and they were anxious to be released, and to see something new. Here Aunt Sophy was of the greatest assistance. She cried over them, and smiled, and admired their new dresses, and cried again, and bade them be good and not spoil their clothes, and be a comfort to their dear mamma. The ladies kept together in the little morning room till everybody was gone. It was very quiet there, out of the bustle; and they had been told that there was no need for their presence in the library where the gentlemen were, John Trevanion with the Messrs. Blake. There was no need, indeed, for any formal reading of the will. There could be little uncertainty about a man's will whose estates were entailed, and who had a young family to provide for. Nobody had any doubt that he would deal justly with his children, and the will was quite safe in the hands of the executors. Refreshments were taken to them in the library, and the ladies shared the children's simple dinner. It was all very serious, very quiet, but there could be no doubt that the weight and oppression were partially withdrawn.

The short afternoon had begun to darken, and Aunt Sophy had already asked if it were not nearly time for tea, when Dorrington, the butler, knocked at the door, and with a very solemn countenance delivered 'Mr. John Trevanion's compliments, and would Madam be so good as step into the library for a few minutes?'

The few minutes were Dorrington's addition. The look of the gentlemen seated at the table close together like criminals awaiting execution, and fearing that every moment would bring the headsman, had alarmed Dorrington. He was favourable to his mistress on the whole; and he thought this summons meant something. So unconsciously he softened his message. A few minutes had a reassuring sound. They all looked up at him as the message was given.

'They will want to consult you about something,' said Aunt Sophy; 'you have managed everything for so long. He said only a few minutes. Make haste, dear, and we will wait for you for tea.'

'Shall I go with you, mamma?' said Rosalind, rising and following to the door.

Mrs. Trevanion hesitated for a moment. 'Why should I be so foolish?' she said, with a faint smile. 'I would say yes, come; but that it is too silly.'

'I will come, mamma.'

'No; it is absolute folly. As if I were a novice! Make your aunt comfortable, dear, and don't let her wait for me.' She was going away, when something in Rosalind's face attracted her notice. The girl's eyes were intent upon her with a pity and terror in them that was indescribable. Mrs. Trevanion made a step back again and kissed her. 'You must not be frightened, Rosalind. There can be nothing bad enough for that; but don't let your aunt wait,' she said; and closing the door quickly behind her she left the peaceful protection of the women with whom she was safe, and went to meet her fate.

The library was naturally a dark room, heavy with books, with solemn curtains and sad-coloured furniture. The three large windows were like shaded lines of vertical light in the breadth of the gloom. On the table some candles had been lighted, and flared with a sort of wild waving when the door was opened. Lighted up by them, against the dark background, were the pale faces of John Trevanion and old Mr. Blake. Both had a look of agitation and even alarm, as if they were afraid of her. Behind them, only half visible, was the doctor, leaning against a corner of the mantelpiece, with his face hidden by his hand. John Trevanion rose without a word, and placed a chair for his sister-in-law close to where they sat. He drew nearer to his colleague when he sat down again, as if for protection, which, however, Mr. Blake, a most respectable unheroic person, with his countenance like ashes, and looking as if he had seen a ghost, was very little qualified to give.

'My dear Grace,' said John, clearing his voice, which trembled, 'we have taken the liberty to ask you to come here, instead of going to you.'

'I am very glad to come if you want me, John,' she said simply, with a frankness and ease which confused them more and more.

'Because,' he went on, clearing his throat again, endeavouring to control his voice, 'because we have something—very painful to say.'

'Very painful; more painful than anything I ever had to do with in all my life,' Mr. Blake added, in a husky voice.

She looked from one to another, questioning their faces, though neither of them would meet her eyes. The bitterness of death had passed from Mrs. Trevanion's mind. The presentiment that had hung so heavily about her had blown away like a cloud. Sitting by the fire in the innocent company of Sophy, with Rosalind by her, the darkness had seemed to roll together and pass away. But when she looked from one of these men to the other, it came back and enveloped her like a shroud.

She said 'Yes?' quickly, her breath failing, and looked at them, who could not meet her eyes.

'It is so,' said John. 'We must not mince our words. Whatever may have passed between you two, whatever he may have heard or found out, we can say nothing less than that it is most unjust and cruel.'

'Savage, barbarous! I should never have thought it. I should have refused to do it,' his colleague cried, in his high-pitched voice.

'But we have no alternative. We must carry his will out, and we are bound to let you know without delay.'

'This delay is already too much,' she said hurriedly. 'Is it something in my husband's will? Why try to frighten me? Tell me at once.'

'God knows we are not trying to frighten you. Nothing so terrible could occur to your mind or anyone's, Grace,' said John Trevanion, with a nervous quivering of his voice. 'The executioner used to ask pardon of those he was about to— I think I am going to give you your sentence of death.'

'Then I give you—my pardon—freely. What is it? Do not torture me any longer,' she said.

He thrust away his chair from the table, and covered his face with his hands. 'Tell her, Blake; I cannot,' he cried.

Then there ensued a silence like death. No one seemed to breathe: when suddenly the high-pitched shrill voice of the old lawyer came out like something visible, mingled with the flaring of the candles and the darkness all around.

'I will spare you the legal language,' said Mr. Blake. 'It is this. The children are all provided for, as is natural and fit, but with this proviso—that their mother shall be at once and entirely separated from them. If Mrs. Trevanion remains with them, or takes any one of them to be with her, they are totally disinherited, and their money is left to various hospitals and charities. Either Mrs. Trevanion must leave them at once, and give up all communication with them, or they lose everything. That is in brief what we have to say.'

She sat listening without changing her position, with a dimness of confusion and amaze coming over her clear gaze. The intimation was so bewildering, so astounding, that her faculties failed to grasp it. Then she said: 'To leave them—my children? To be separated from my children?' with a shrill tone of inquiry, rising into a sort of breathless cry.

John Trevanion took his hands from his face, and looked at

her with a look which brought more certainty than words. The old lawyer clasped his hands upon the papers before him, without lifting his eyes, and mournfully nodded again and again his grey head. But she waited for an answer. She could not let herself believe it. 'It is not *that*? My head is going round. I don't understand the meaning of words. It is not *that*?'

And then she rose up suddenly to her feet, clasping her hands together, and cried out, 'My God!' The men rose too, as with one impulse; and John Trevanion called out loudly to the doctor, who hurried to her. She put them away with a motion of her hands. 'The doctor? What can the doctor do for me?' she cried with the scorn of despair. 'Go, go, go! I need no support.' The men had come close to her on either side, with that confused idea that the victim must faint or fall, or sustain some physical convulsion, which men naturally entertain in respect to a woman. She made a motion, as if to keep them away, with her arms, and stood there in the midst, her pale face with the white surroundings of her distinctive dress, clearly defined against the other dusk and troubled countenances. They thought the moments of suspense endless, but to her they were imperceptible. Not all the wisest counsellors in the world could have helped her in that effort of desperation which her lonely soul was making to understand. There was so much that no one knew but herself. Her mind went through all the details of a history unthought of. She had to put together and follow the thread of events, and gather up a hundred indications which now came all flashing about her like marsh-lights, leading her swift thoughts here and there, through the hitherto undivined workings of her husband's mind, and ripening of fate. Thus it was that she came slowly to perceive what it meant, and all that it meant, which nature even when perceiving the sense of the words had refused to believe. When she spoke they all started with a sort of panic and individual alarm, as if something might be coming which would be too terrible to listen to. But what she said had a strange composure, which was a relief, yet almost a horror to them. 'Will you tell me,' she asked, 'exactly what it is, again?'

Old Mr. Blake sat down again at the table, fumbled for his spectacles, unfolded his papers. Meanwhile she stood and waited with the others behind her, and listened without moving while he read, this time in its legal phraseology, the terrible sentence. She drew a long breath when it was over. This time there was no amaze or confusion. The words were like fire in her brain.

'Now I begin to understand. I suppose,' she said, 'that there is nothing but public resistance, and perhaps bringing it before a court of law, that could annul *that*? Oh, do not fear. I will not try; but is that the only way?'

The old lawyer shook his head. 'Not even that. He had the right: and though he has used it as no man should have used it, still it is done, and cannot be undone.'

'Then there is no help for me,' she said. She was perfectly quiet, without a tear, or sob, or struggle. 'No help for me,' she repeated, with a wan little smile about her mouth. 'After seventeen years! He had the right, do you say? Oh, how strange a right! when I have been his wife for seventeen years.' Then she added, 'Is it stipulated when I am to go? Is there any time given to prepare? And have you told my boy?'

'Not a word has been said, Grace—to no one,' John Trevanion said.

'Ah, I did not think of that. What is he to be told? A boy of that age. He will think his mother is—— John, God help me! What will you say to my boy?'

'God help us all,' cried the strong man, entirely overcome. 'Grace, I do not know.'

'The others are too young,' she said; 'and Rosalind. Rosalind will trust me; but Rex—it will be better to tell him the simple truth, that it is his father's will—and perhaps when he is a man he will understand.' She said this with a steady voice, like some queen making her last dispositions in full health and force before her execution—living yet dying. Then there ensued another silence, which no one ventured to break, during which the doomed woman went back into her separate world of thought. She recovered herself after a moment, and looking round, with once more that faint smile, asked, 'Is there anything else I ought to hear?'

'There is this, Mrs. Trevanion,' said old Blake. 'One thing is just among so much—— What was settled on you is untouched. You have a right to——'

She threw her head high with an indignant motion, and turned away; but after she had made a few steps towards the door, paused and came back. 'Look,' she said, 'you gentlemen; here is something that is beyond you, which a woman has to bear. I must accept this humiliation, too. I cannot dig, and to beg I am ashamed.' She looked at them with a bitter dew in her eyes, not tears. 'I must take his money and be thankful. God help me!' she said.

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. TREVANION appeared at dinner as usual, coming into the drawing-room at the last moment, to the great surprise of the gentlemen, who stared and started as if at a ghost as she came in, their concealed alarm and astonishment forming a strange contrast to the absolute calm of Mrs. Lennox, the slight, boyish impatience of Reginald at being kept waiting for dinner, and the evident relief of Rosalind, who had been questioning them all with anxious eyes. Madam was very pale; but she smiled and made a brief apology. She took old Mr. Blake's arm to go in to dinner, who, though he was a man who had seen a great deal in his life, shook 'like as a leaf,' he said afterwards; but her arm was as steady as a rock, and supported him. The doctor said to her under his breath as they sat down, 'You are doing too much. Remember, endurance is not boundless.' 'Is it not?' she said aloud, looking at him with a smile. He was a man of composed and robust mind, but he ate no dinner that day. The dinner was indeed a farce for most of the company. Aunt Sophy, indeed, though with a shake of her head, and a sighing remark now and then, took full advantage of her meal, and Reginald cleared off everything that was set before him with the facility of his age; but the others made such attempts as they could to deceive the calm but keen penetration of Dorrington, who saw through all their pretences, and having served many meals in many houses after a funeral, knew that 'something' must be 'up,' more than Mr. Trevanion's death, to account for the absence of appetite. There was not much conversation either. Aunt Sophy, indeed, to the relief of everyone, took the position of spokeswoman. 'I would not have troubled to come downstairs this evening, Grace,' she said. 'You always did too much. I am sure all the watching and nursing you have had would have killed ten ordinary people; but she never spared herself, did she, doctor? Well, it is a satisfaction now. You must feel that you neglected nothing, and that everything that could be thought of was done—everything! I am sure you and I, John, can bear witness to that, that a more devoted nurse no man ever had. Poor Reginald,' she added, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, 'if he did not always seem so grateful as he ought, you may be sure, dear, it was his illness that was to blame, not his heart.' No one dared to make any reply to this, till Madam herself said, after a pause, her voice sounding distinct through a hushed atmosphere of attention, 'All that is over and forgotten; there is no blame.'

'Yes, my dear,' said innocent Sophy; 'that is a most natural and beautiful sentiment for you. But John and I can never forget how patient you were. A king could not have been better taken care of.'

'Everybody,' said the doctor, with fervour, 'knows that. I have never known such nursing;' and in the satisfaction of saying this he managed to dispose of the chicken on his plate. His very consumption of it was to Madam's credit. He could not have swallowed a morsel, but for having had the opportunity for this ascription of praise.

'And if I were you,' said Mrs. Lennox, 'I would not worry myself about taking up everything so soon again. I am sure you must want a thorough rest. I wish, indeed, you would just make up your mind to come home with me, for a change would do you good. I said to poor dear Maria Heathcote, when I left her this morning, "My dear, you may expect me confidently to-night; unless my poor dear sister-in-law wants me. But dear Grace has, of course, the first claim upon me," I said. And if I were you I would not try my strength too much. You should have stayed in your room to-night, and have had a tray with something light and trifling. You don't eat a morsel,' Aunt Sophy said, with true regret. 'And Rosalind and I would have come upstairs and sat with you. I have more experience than you have in trouble,' added the good lady with a sigh (who, indeed, 'had buried *two* dear husbands,' as she said), 'and that has always been my experience. You must not do too much at first. To-morrow is always a new day.'

'To-morrow,' Mrs. Trevanion said, 'there will be many things to think of.' She lingered on the word a little, with a tremulousness which all the men felt as if it had been a knife going into their hearts. Her voice got more steady as she went on. 'You must go back to school on Monday, Rex,' she said; 'that will be best. You must not lose any time now, but be a man as soon as you can, for all our sakes.'

'Oh, as for being a man,' said Reginald, 'that doesn't just depend on age, mother. My tutor would rather have me for his captain than Smith, who is nineteen. He said so. It depends upon a fellow's character.'

'That is what I think too,' she said, with a smile upon her boy. 'And, Sophy, if you will take Rosalind and your godchild instead of me, I think it will do them good. I—you may suppose I have a great many things to think of.'

‘Leave them, dear, till you are stronger, that is my advice; and I know more about trouble than you do,’ Mrs. Lennox said.

Mrs. Trevanion gave a glance around her. There was a faint smile upon her face. The three gentlemen sitting by did not know even that she looked at them, but they felt each like a culprit, guilty and responsible. Her eyes seemed to appeal speechlessly to earth and heaven, yet with an almost humorous consciousness of good Mrs. Lennox’s superiority in experience. ‘I should like Rosalind and Sophy to go with you for a change,’ she said quietly. ‘The little ones will be best at home. Russell is not good for Sophy, Rosalind; but for the little ones it does not matter so much. She is very kind and careful of them. That covers a multitude of sins. I think, for their sakes, she may stay.’

‘I would not keep her, mamma. She is dangerous; she is wicked.’

‘What do you mean by that, Rose? Russell! I should as soon think of mamma going as of Russell going,’ cried Rex. ‘She says mamma hates her, but I say——’

‘I wonder,’ said Mrs. Trevanion, ‘that you do not find yourself above nursery gossip, Rex, at your age. Never mind, it is a matter to be talked of afterwards. You are not going away immediately, John?’

‘Not as long as——’ He paused and looked at her wistfully, with eyes that said a thousand things. ‘As long as I can be of use,’ he said.

‘As long as——. I think I know what you mean,’ Mrs. Trevanion said.

The conversation was full of these *sous-entendus*. Except Mrs. Lennox and Rex, there was a sense of mystery and uncertainty in all the party. Rosalind followed every speaker with her eyes, inquiring what they could mean. Mrs. Trevanion was the most composed of the company, though meanings were found afterwards in every word she said. The servants had gone from the room while the latter part of this conversation went on. After a little while she rose, and all of them with her. She called Reginald, who followed reluctantly, feeling that he was much too important a person to retire with the ladies. As she went out, leaning upon his arm, she waved her hand to the other gentlemen. ‘Good-night,’ she said. ‘I don’t think I am equal to the drawing-room to-night.’

‘What do you want with me, mother? It isn’t right, it isn’t, indeed, to call me away like a child. I’m not a child; and

I ought to be there to hear what they are going to settle. Don't you see, mamma, it's my concern ?'

'You can go back presently, Rex; yes, my boy, it is your concern. I want you to think so, dear. And the little ones are your concern. Being the head of a house means a great deal. It means thinking of everything, taking care of the brothers and sisters, not only being a person of importance, Rex——'

'I know, I know. If this is all you wanted to say——'

'Almost all. That you must think of your duties, dear. It is unfortunate for you, oh, very unfortunate, to be left so young: but your Uncle John will be your true friend.'

'Well, that don't matter much. Oh, I dare say he will be good enough. Then you know, mammy,' said the boy condescendingly, giving her a hurried kiss, and eager to get away, 'when there's anything very hard I can come and talk it over with you.'

She did not make any reply, but kissed him, holding his reluctant form close to her. He did not like to be hugged, and he wanted to be back among the men. 'One moment,' she said. 'Promise me you will be very good to the little ones, Rex.'

'Why, of course, mother,' said the boy; 'you didn't think I would beat them, did you? Good-night.'

'Good-bye, my own boy.' He had darted from her almost before she could withdraw her arm. She paused a moment to draw breath, and then followed to the door of the drawing-room where the other ladies were gone. 'I think, Sophy,' she said, 'I will take your advice and go to my room: and you must arrange with Rosalind to take her home with you, and Sophy too.'

'That I will, with all my heart; and I don't despair of getting you to come. Good-night, dear. Should you like me to come and sit with you a little when you have got to bed?'

'Not to-night,' said Mrs. Trevanion. 'I am tired out. Good-night, Rosalind. God bless you, my darling.' She held the girl in her arms, and drew her towards the door. 'I can give you no explanation about last night, and you will hear other things. Think of me as kindly as you can, my own, that are none of mine,' she said, bending over her with her eyes full of tears.

'Mother,' said the girl, flinging herself into Mrs. Trevanion's arms with enthusiasm, 'you can do no wrong.'

'God bless you, my own dear.'

This parting seemed sufficiently justified by the circumstances. The funeral day! Could it be otherwise than that their nerves were highly strung, and words of love and mutual support, which might have seemed exaggerated at other times, should now have

seemed natural? Rosalind, with her heart bursting, went back to her aunt's side, and sat down and listened to her placid talk. She would rather have been with her suffering mother, but for that worn-out woman there was nothing so good as rest.

Mrs. Trevanion went back to the nursery, where her little children were fast asleep in their cots, and Sophy preparing for bed. Sophy was still grumbling over the fact that she had not been allowed to go down to dessert. 'Why shouldn't I go down?' she cried, sitting on the floor, taking off her shoes. 'Oh, here's mamma! What difference could it have made? Grown-up people are nasty and cruel. I should not have done any harm going downstairs. Reggie is *dining* downstairs. He is always the one that is petted, because he is a boy, though he is only five years older than me.'

'Hush, Miss Sophy. It was your mamma's doing, and mammas are always right.'

'You don't think so, Russell. Oh, I don't want to kiss you, mamma. It was so unkind, and Reggie going on Monday; and I have not been down to dessert—not for a week.'

'But I must kiss you, Sophy,' the mother said. 'You are going away with your aunt and Rosalind, on a visit. Is not that better than coming down to dessert?'

'Oh, mamma!' The child jumped up with one shoe on, and threw herself against her mother's breast. 'Oh, I am so glad. Aunt Sophy lets us do whatever we please.' She gave a careless kiss in response to Mrs. Trevanion's embrace. 'I should like to stay there for ever,' Sophy said.

There was a smile on the mother's face as she withdrew it, as there had been a smile of strange wonder and wistfulness when she took leave of Rex. The little ones were asleep. She went and stood for a moment between the two white cots. Then all was done. And the hour had come to which, without knowing what awaited her, she had looked with so much terror on the previous night.

A dark night, with sudden blasts of rain, and a sighing wind which moaned about the house, and gave notes of warning of the dreary wintry weather to come. As Mrs. Lennox and Rosalind sat silent over the fire, there suddenly seemed to come in and pervade the luxurious house a blast, as if the night had entered bodily, a great draught of fresh, cold, odorous, rainy air, charged with the breath of the wet fields and earth. And then there was the muffled sound as of a closed door. 'What is that?' said Aunt Sophy, pricking up her ears. 'It cannot be visitors come so late, and on such a day as this.'

'It sounds like some one going out,' Rosalind said, with a shiver, thinking on what she had seen last night. 'Perhaps,' she added eagerly, after a moment, with a great sense of relief, 'Mr. Blake going away.'

'It will be that, of course, though I did not hear wheels; and what a dismal night for his drive, poor old gentleman. That wind always makes me wretched. It moans and groans like a human creature. But it is very odd, Rosalind, that we did not hear any wheels.'

'The wind drowns other sounds,' Rosalind said.

'That must be so, I suppose. Still, I hope he doesn't think of walking, Rosalind; an old man of that age.'

And then once more all fell into silence in the great luxurious house. Outside the wind blew in the faces of the wayfarers. The rain drenched them in sudden gusts, the paths were slippery and wet, the trees discharged sharp volleys of collected rain as the blasts blew. To struggle across the park was no easy matter in the face of the blinding sleet and capricious wind: and you could not hear your voice under the trees for the din that was going on overhead.

(To be continued.)

The 'Donna.'

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INDEX

TO THE THIRD VOLUME.

AGRICULTURE (Virgil and) in Tuscany, 403

A. K. H. B., on Lord Lyndhurst, 391
Allen (Grant) The Ancestry of Birds, 284

Alphabetical Rhymes, 151

André (G. G.) The Ice Harvest on the Hudson River, 410

Anstey (F.) The Decay of the British Ghost, 251

At the Docks, 110, 224

BALL (Robert S.) The Relation of Darwinism to other branches of Science, 93

Ballade of His Own Country, 202

Ballade of an English Home, 495

Becker (Lydia E.) 'Sir Hilary's Prayer,' 109

Birds, The Ancestry of, 284

Boyes (J. F.) In Memoriam Dutton Cook, 179

British Ghost, The Decay of the, 251

CHILDREN (The) of the Mist, 71

Clerke's (The) Tale, 298

Colonus, 402

Contrasts, 283

Cook (Dutton), 179

County Franchise, After the, 362

Cycling, The Development of, 480

DARWINISM (The Relation of) to other branches of Science, 93

Docks, At the, 110, 224

'Donna,' The, 334, 448, 500, 682

EXPERIENCE, A Strange, 504

FISHES, Queer, 521

Fortuna, The Foundering of the, 94

Franchise (County), After the, 362

GHOST (British), The Decay of the, 251

Gibson (John) Queer Fishes, 521

Goethe, 'Manager,' 496

Gurney (Edmund) Alphabetical Rhymes, 151

HAMILTON (A. H. A.) The Modern Nebuchadnezzar, 188

Harte (Bret) Left out on Lone Star Mountain, 259

Haweis (Rev. H. R.) Liszt, 203

Hervey (Charles) Notes of an Old Paris Playgoer, 172

— 'Manager,' Goethe, 496

Hillier (G. Lacy) The Development of Cycling, 480

Hudson River, The Ice Harvest on the, 410

ICE Harvest (The) on the Hudson River, 410

Ireland, An Opening for the Unemployed in, 44

JACK'S Courtship, by W. Clark Russell, 1, 113, 225, 337, 449, 561

Jefferies (Richard) The Wiltshire Labourer, 66

— After the County Franchise, 362

KEBBEL (T. E.) A Pilgrimage to
Selborne, 644

LABOURER, The Wiltshire, 66
Lang (A.) Ballade of His Own
Country, 202
— Ballade of an English Home,
495
Left out on Lone Star Mountain, 259
Leland (Charles G.) An Opening for
the Unemployed in Ireland, 44
Liszt, 203
'Lively Fanny,' The, 376
Love at First Sight, 71
Lyndhurst (Lord), 391

MADAM, by Mrs. Oliphant, 304, 418,
532, 653
Martin (Miss A. L.) Contrasts, 283
Miller (W. C.) The Macready Riot
in New York, 636
Mist, The Children of the, 71
Mole (The) at Home, 156
'Mrs. Jerningham's Journal' (Au-
thor of) Love at First Sight, 71
Murray (D. Christie) The 'Lively
Fanny,' 376

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, The Modern, 188
Nesbit (E.) A Strange Experience,
504
New York, The Macready Riot in,
636

OLIPHANT (Mrs.) Madam, 304, 418,
532, 653

PARIS Playgoer (Old), Notes of an,
172
Parson, A Mad, 614

Peel (E. Lennox) The Children of
the Mist, 71
Proctor (R. A.) A New Theory of
Sun-spots, 587

RHYMES, Alphabetical, 151
Roes (Mrs.) Virgil and Agriculture
in Tuscany, 403
Russell (W. Clark) Jack's Courtship,
1, 113, 225, 337, 449, 561

SELBORNE, A Pilgrimage to, 644
Sim (W. A.) Vox Clamantis, 93
'Sir Hilary's Prayer,' 109
Steeple-chasing, 604
Sturgis (Julian) A Mad Parson,
614
Sun-spots, A New Theory of, 587

TUSCANY, Virgil and Agriculture in,
403

UNEMPLOYED in Ireland, An Opening
for the, 44

VACHELL (M. C.) The Clerke's Tale,
298
Virgil and Agriculture in Tuscany,
403
Vox Clamantis, 93

WATSON (A. E. T.) Steeple-chasing,
604
Wilson (J. Arbuthnot) The Found-
ering of the Fortuna, 94
Wiltshire Labourer (The), 66
Wood (Rev. J. G.) The Mole at
Home, 156
Wotherspoon (G.) Colonus, 402

f
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At

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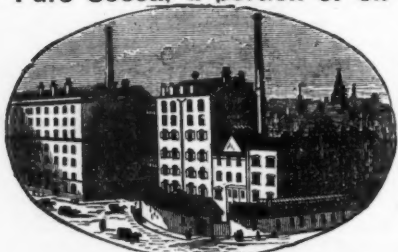
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